

THE NATION

AND ATHENÆUM



VOL. XLIII.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1928.

No. 22

CONTENTS

	PAGE
EVENTS OF THE WEEK	691
THE PACT AND THE COMPROMISE	694
THE CHALLENGE TO PROHIBITION	695
THE NEW CENSORSHIP	696
LIFE AND POLITICS. By Kappa	696
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Mr. Wells and the Liberal Party (H. G. Wells); The Anglo-French Naval Agreement (Robert Dell); Imports and Exports (Ronald F. Walker, and F. W. Bacon); The Safeguarding of Steel (Oswald Earp); The Suppression of "The Well of Loneliness" (J. R. A. Bradley); B.B.C. Pronunciation (J. C. Graham); A New Children's Charter (D. Halliday Macartney)	698-701
PITCH AND TOSS. By J. B. Sterndale Bennett	702
MORE LIGHT! By Raymond Mortimer	703
PLAYS AND PICTURES. By Omicron	704
A HUNDRED YEARS AGO: THE ATHENÆUM, SEPTEMBER 3RD, 1828	705
THE WORLD OF BOOKS:— The Antibabelists. By Leonard Woolf	706

	PAGE
REVIEWS:—	
Anatole France. By Sylva Norman	707
The Author of Hudibras. By Professor Allardyce Nicoll	707
The Triumphant Captive. By Edmund Blunden	708
Mrs. Thrale and Conway. By Francis Birrell	709
Doctor Doolittle's Garden	709
Can Cancer be Prevented? By Dr. Harry Roberts	710
The World to Play With	710
BOOKS IN BRIEF	712
NEW GRAMOPHONE RECORDS	712
INSURANCE NOTES	712
FINANCIAL SECTION:— The Week in the City	714
THE NATION is edited and published at 38, Great James Street, London, W.C.1. Chairman: J. M. KEYNES. Editor: H. D. HENDERSON. Telephone: Business Manager: Museum 5551. Editorial: Museum 5552. Telegrams: "Nationetta, Holb. London." Annual Subscription, Thirty Shillings, including postage to any part of the world. MSS. should be addressed to the Editor, and accompanied by stamped and addressed envelope for return.	

EVENTS OF THE WEEK

THE Kellogg Pact has been signed, and separate invitations to adhere to it are being sent to the Powers not represented among the original signatories. Indeed, the invitation to Soviet Russia was formally handed to M. Litvinoff, the Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs, on the actual day of the signing. Regrettable as it is that Russia was not represented on August 27th, this issue of a separate invitation is a great improvement on a mere general notification that non-signatory Powers were free to adhere to the Pact. Of those who attended in Paris, the chief interest naturally centred on Herr Stresemann, who persisted, against the advice of his doctors, in making the journey. His reception was good, and he was paid a warm personal tribute by M. Briand, the only speaker at the ceremony of signing. M. Briand, himself, while naturally jubilant over the success of his and Mr. Kellogg's efforts, very properly emphasized the fact that the treaty is "a beginning and not an end unto itself." The value of the Pact depends on what follows its signature. No reference to unpleasant actualities, such as the Rhineland, was allowed to mar the harmony of the proceedings; but it is by such questions that the sincerity of the signatories will be tested.

The Fascist Press, at any rate, is frank enough as to the value it attaches to the Pact. Writing in the *LAVORO D'ITALIA*, Signor Alfredo Signoretti informs us that for Italy, "with no room to breathe," there can be no real renunciation of war as an instrument of policy. Among the signatories to the Pact there was

"one great absentee"; Italy's soul was not behind her signature. She was represented, it would seem, only as a sort of astral body, whose signature could be repudiated without disgrace. It is a convenient and comforting theory for Powers unwilling either to accept an international obligation or to take the responsibility of openly standing aloof. Let us hope that, in this also, Signor Mussolini is more realist than his followers.

* * *

It is extremely unfortunate that the signing of the Pact should have taken place in an atmosphere poisoned by rumours of a secret Franco-British entente. Until August 25th, no French paper of the Left had made any comment on these rumours, but on that day M. Léon Blum broke the silence with a disquieting leader in the *POPULAIRE*. He said that when, a fortnight before, Mr. Arthur Henderson had expressed to him at Brussels his "keen anxiety" about the interpretation of the naval agreement in the *MANCHESTER GUARDIAN*, he had assured him that it could not be accurate; but he had since become seriously alarmed. The *TEMPS*, which spoke for the Quai d'Orsay, had let out an avowal that the agreement was in the category of "guarantees of security" peculiar to two nations, that is, in the category of military conventions, implying combined use of forces. "It is quite clear," he goes on, "that on the day when the English and French fleets become two complementary forces, practising between themselves a sort of division of labour, apportioning in advance between themselves building efforts and, when the occasion arises, strategic tasks, the spirit of limitation conventions, past or future, would be violated as

regards the other signatories. The time of general disarmament would not have been hastened, but put off to a far distant future." Such language from M. Blum, hypothetical in form though it is, acquires a special significance from the fact that he is understood to be on terms of intimate friendship with M. Philippe Berthelot, who has a flat in the same house as himself, and from the consequent possibility that M. Blum's apprehensions may rest on a more authoritative basis than his own inferences from the article in the *TEMPS*.

* * *

A letter from Mr. Robert Dell, which we publish this week, gives further details of the allegations made in the *Paris Press*. We are unwilling, as we have said, to accept these allegations at their face value; but it is important that the British public should realize what is being said. Reports in the *Japanese Press*, apparently semi-officially inspired, rather confirm the statements that it is not cruisers with guns of "6-in. and upwards," but only cruisers with guns "above 6-in." that are to be limited, leaving the number of cruisers with 6-in. guns unlimited. If this be so, it seems hopeless to dream of an agreement with the United States. As against this, Japan is said to approve the compromise on the ground that it is likely to facilitate such an agreement. Clearly we must await the text of the compromise before passing judgment; but the actual naval formula itself is a less serious matter, important as it is, than the truth or falsehood of the statements as to a secret entente. We comment elsewhere on the continued silence of the Foreign Office, and its consequences to the prospects of giving vitality to the Pact.

* * *

Considerable perturbation was caused in Ireland this week by the announcement that the Ford works at Cork were to be closed down in whole or in part and the machinery transferred to Manchester. The perturbation will be diminished, but perhaps not entirely removed, by the statement of Mr. Cooper, the Manager of the Ford works in Manchester, that, while the manufacture of motor-cars is, indeed, to be transferred to Manchester, tractors are to be manufactured in Cork on a large scale for the European market. According to Mr. Cooper, Mr. Ford has delayed transferring the automobile plant, out of sheer consideration for Ireland, and at the cost of his own pocket, until he saw his way to start the compensating tractor production. None the less, a measure of futurity and uncertainty seems to attach to the establishment of the tractor plant, while the transfer of the automobile plant is immediate and certain. And as the Free State had nourished hopes that the scale of automobile production at Cork was to be extended, disappointment is likely to remain.

* * *

Mr. Ford's decision recalls the rather curious episode during his recent visit to England, when a reporter asked him whether he proposed to go to Cork to receive the freedom of the city. Mr. Ford replied that he was not going to Cork "so long as the Free State prevents our manufacturing anything over there and sending it to this country." The Free State authorities not unnaturally protested that their tariff did not interfere with the export of motor-cars to Britain; and Mr. Ford, on being pressed, explained that he was referring not so much to the Free State tariff as to Anglo-Irish tariffs in general. It is, of course, our own McKenna duties that make it more profitable for Mr. Ford to supply the British market from Manchester. But in laying the blame on Free State policy and then excusing himself by lump-

ing the British and Irish tariffs together, Mr. Ford had more reason than appears on the surface. For, after all, it is entirely due to Irish insistence on tariff autonomy that exports from the Free State are exposed to the operation of the McKenna duties. Britain would have been delighted to retain, and would still be delighted to restore, complete Free Trade within the British Isles. Thus it is true enough that Irish Protectionism is responsible, at one remove, for the removal of the Ford works from Cork.

* * *

The creation of an Albanian monarchy probably meets the wishes of a very large number of Albanians, who have lived from time immemorial under the rule of chieftains whose authority was derived solely from their birth and family connections. But the new monarch will obviously have many rivals and enemies, whose birth and local prestige is equal to his own, and whose opinions upon religion, politics, and, above all, taxation are diametrically opposed to his. The mere creation of an Albanian monarchy will not, in itself, put any order or uniformity into the domestic affairs of that turbulent country. It will, however, give additional consistency to Albania's foreign policy, which will henceforward be representative of one man's views and inclinations, and will no longer pass, periodically, from the pro-Serbs to the pro-Italian cabals. Whether this will be good or bad for the peace of the Balkans remains to be seen: hitherto Ahmed Beg Zogu has shown strong Italian sympathies, largely because his estates were ferociously devastated by the Serbs in the first Balkan War. A marked inclination for a foreign Power is not a very good tendency in an Albanian monarch. It must, however, be remembered that a Sunni Moslem like Ahmed Beg is more likely to keep an even balance between Italy and Serbia than a prince elected from one of the Catholic clans.

* * *

The Serbian Press has not given the new King of Albania a good welcome, and has made the rather ludicrous comment that if the Government had not been so troubled with the Croats they would have done something to make the way of Ahmed Beg's promotion steep and difficult. The Serbian authorities are certainly doing everything that can reasonably be expected of them to make their domestic troubles really serious. They have made no attempt whatever to accommodate the differences between the Skupshtina and the assemblies and committees to which the Croats have entrusted their affairs; and they have replied to a Croatian manifesto of domestic policy, which could easily have been made the starting point for discussion, by a severe order to all their judicial officers in Croatia, to institute proceedings against any individual Croat who attempts to make mass propaganda—whatever that may be. If the Serbians want civil war, they cannot do more for the moment. The remarkable and consoling feature of the position is that nothing really serious is happening, which probably means that the King's policy of conciliation is an effective influence in what would otherwise be a competition in folly.

* * *

It is still impossible to say whether Baron Hayashi's scepticism about the stability of the Nanking Government is likely to be justified by events. The Kuomintang conference has dispersed, with the usual record of enthusiastic but inexperienced assemblies. Whilst it was sitting, the local Press showed great nervousness if any of the leading generals left the conference earlier than was expected, and made the usual gloomy fore-

casts about impending divisions. Certainly the Kuomintang conference has failed to show any unanimity of views or purpose upon the problem of demobilization, which is the most urgent question confronting the Chinese authorities. Until a start has been made, it will be difficult to say what authority the Nanking Government possesses, or is likely to acquire. There is, however, one encouraging symptom. For the first time in many years, the Chinese authorities seem free to conduct foreign negotiations in an ordinary business-like way, and to be independent of the wild catchwords and *mots de guerre* which hitherto have been the driving forces of their policy.

* * *

This new tendency is particularly noticeable in the note which Nanking has recently sent to Tokyo. The Chinese authorities have entered into serious argument as to whether the existing commercial treaty can be denounced as they have denounced it—in which they have a poor case; they have also put it on record that they do not wish to discriminate against Japanese commerce, and have not thus far enforced their provisional regulations with regard to Japanese trade. It is curious that the Chinese should claim that regulations issued *in terrorem* are proof of fair and moderate dealing; but a note like this is a very great advance upon the style of note which the Chinese authorities have hitherto thought proper to issue. It is indeed a very astute way of meeting the Japanese attitude; for it more or less obliges the Tokyo authorities to say whether they are willing to act as other Great Powers are acting upon the question of tariffs, and separates the Manchurian issue from that of treaty revision. The Tanaka Government will incur a serious responsibility if they adhere to their waiting attitude upon all points of controversy.

* * *

We should not have expected the Massachusetts authorities to be so proud of the Sacco-Vanzetti affair as to go out of their way to keep its memory alive. Yet they have chosen to do so by launching an extraordinary prosecution which is likely to acquire a world-wide notoriety. Professor H. M. Kallen, a philosopher of some note, has been arrested on a charge of blasphemy. His offence is that at a memorial meeting in Boston on the anniversary of the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti he declared: "If Sacco and Vanzetti were anarchists, so were Christ and Socrates." The blasphemy law is over two centuries old; and, if it is anything like our own, it is probable that a strict construction of it would send to prison many of the most respectable members of society for writings or speeches at which no one nowadays raises an eyebrow. But, even if strictly construed, blasphemy hardly seems to apply to Professor Kallen's words; for manifestly they were not intended to be in any sense derogatory to Christ. But, of course, his real offence was that he was denouncing the treatment of Sacco and Vanzetti. If he had been denouncing *them*, he could safely have been as blasphemous as he chose.

* * *

The depressed condition of the mining industry has led to an important innovation in the method of calculating wages in the Warwickshire coalfield. Recently the members of the Warwickshire Coalowners' Association graded themselves into two sections according to the prosperity of their pits, and requested the miners in the less prosperous mines to agree to a reduction of wages. Full particulars of the financial position of each mine were supplied to the workmen's representa-

tives, but the latter, while admitting the serious plight of some of the collieries, declared themselves unwilling to accept the alteration of the wages agreement in the form required by the employers. The owners of the depressed mines have since posted notices terminating the agreements with the men, but, fortunately, at a meeting of the Joint Wages Board for the county on Tuesday a scheme was devised which is acceptable to both sides. The Joint Board has agreed to vary the terms of the wages agreement so as to admit of an alteration in the minimum percentage which is to be added to the basis rate of wages, and has invited each colliery which had given notice to the men to bring its case before the Board for judgment. In this manner the Board have introduced an element of elasticity into the methods of wage ascertainment in the mines, while attempting to restrict the alterations necessary to as small a field as possible.

* * *

Since Wednesday a week ago the miners employed at the Featherstone Main Collieries, in Yorkshire, have been idle owing to a dispute with the employers concerning the future terms of employment. A fortnight ago the owners of the South Kirkby, Featherstone, and Hemsworth Collieries, Limited, served notices on the men terminating the existing contracts at the Featherstone pit on the ground that the large quantities of dirt, amounting last year to 90,000 tons, which were raised together with the coal caused a loss which rendered economic working of the mine impossible. The employers therefore demand a new agreement, which would reduce the colliers' basis wage by 10 per cent., discontinue the payment for setting and withdrawing timber, and remove the restriction regarding the number of men working together in one stall. A mass meeting of the pitmen unanimously decided to reject the new terms, and, in addition, men employed at the other pits of the company have pledged their full support, including the possibility of a sympathetic strike. At present two thousand workers are unemployed, but if the dispute spreads a total of 8,000 men may be involved. A meeting which was held on Monday between the management and representatives of the men and of the Miners' Federation was fruitless, and the best hope of peace would seem to be to refer the dispute to the Yorkshire Joint Wages Board. Such episodes are making for a bad state of mind in the coalfields which may be the cause of serious trouble when the miners recover from the exhaustion entailed by the prolonged stoppage of two years ago.

* * *

A further step towards the consolidation of the Trade-Union movement is being taken in the negotiations which are proceeding to amalgamate the Transport and General Workers' Union and the Workers' Union. At a meeting of the negotiating committees of the two Unions on Monday it was stated that the main difficulties facing the proposed amalgamation have now been surmounted, and a draft scheme of amalgamation is to be prepared which will be considered by the joint conference next October. The proposals are expected to be submitted to the membership of the two Unions at the end of this year or early in the next, and, if the scheme of fusion is ratified by the rank and file, the amalgamation of the Transport and General Workers' Union, possessing a membership of over 300,000, and the Workers' Union, which has 150,000 members, would make the new Union the largest in the country, apart from the Miners' Federation which is at present not strictly a single Union but a Federation.

THE PACT AND THE COMPROMISE

THE Kellogg Pact has been signed. With the eyes of the world upon them, the representatives of the British Empire, the United States, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Belgium, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, have put their hands to a document by which those Powers renounce the use of war as an instrument of national policy. Practically every other settled Government, including that of Soviet Russia, has been, or will be, invited to adhere to the Pact. Almost certainly, the great majority of them will do so.

In itself, this is an outstanding event. For the first time the idea of war, as a means to an end, is definitely ruled out of court, instead of merely being relegated to the position of a last resort. It is the first time, also, since the refusal of the United States to join the League, that Washington has been brought into direct association with Europe, in a scheme for the preservation of peace. These are no small gains. At the very lowest, this public repudiation of war as an instrument of policy must put some check on sabre-rattling diplomacy, and although there are no sanctions under the Pact, and Washington has been careful to preserve the most complete liberty of action, no Power could afford to disregard lightly the possible effect of a flagrant violation of the Pact on American opinion.

Nevertheless, it would be fatal for those who are working for peace and disarmament to assume that the signature of the Pact justifies any relaxation in their efforts. Its moral value has been greatly weakened by the preliminary correspondence, in which the French and British Governments seized with a disquieting eagerness on an unfortunate observation of Mr. Kellogg's that each nation "alone is competent to decide whether circumstances require recourse to war in self-defence." Again, of course, the Pact places no check on operations like the bombardment of Corfu which, falling short of formal "war," are war in everything but name.

How much the Pact really means will depend on two things: the sincerity of the signatories, and their confidence in each other's sincerity. The test of both will be their attitude to the question of disarmament, and to separate security-pacts, groupings, and special understandings. No one expects the signature of the Pact to be followed by immediate, universal disarmament; but the renunciation of war by the Great Powers will mean very little if it has no effect on their conception of the requirements of defence.

At the moment the outlook is far from hopeful. Not one nation has accompanied its signature of the Pact by a practical gesture of confidence in its validity. The French stand firm in the Rhineland and are busily refortifying their Eastern frontier. Great Britain proceeds with the construction of the Singapore base. The

Italian Press is openly sceptical. The statesmen of all countries are more disposed to stress their reservations to the Pact than to emphasize the significance of the Pact itself.

More disquieting than all else are the rumours with regard to a secret understanding behind the Anglo-French compromise on naval disarmament. The current versions of the actual naval formula are contradictory and unreliable; but they give reason to fear that the emphasis has been laid on "security" rather than on limitation, and that a classification has been adopted which will render agreement with the United States more difficult, and range London and Paris against Washington. Still more serious is the allegation of a secret understanding—not embodied in any written document, but underlying the whole purpose and conception of the agreement—by which, in certain contingencies, the whole naval forces of the two Powers would be pooled for the protection of their common interests. This understanding is said to cover an agreement on the limitation of land armaments which would leave France, virtually, a free hand, and would necessarily imply a common policy on such questions as the Rhineland.

These allegations remain in the stage of rumour. Many of the statements that have appeared in the French Press are so improbable in themselves that nothing but the clearest proof would induce us to accept them. Nevertheless, the fact that they have been acclaimed as a triumph for French diplomacy is, in itself, a disquieting indication of the French attitude to the Pact and all it stands for. They have been made, moreover, in papers usually regarded as officially inspired, and in default of a clear, categorical, official denial, there must remain an uneasy doubt whether there may not be some fire behind all this smoke. Semi-official denials of "secret clauses" are beside the point, for it is not on allegations of a precise, written agreement that these rumours rest.

At the best the silence of the Foreign Office suggests a complete failure to realize the importance of a clear political atmosphere for the birth of the Pact. If the naval compromise represents, not a step, however short, in the direction of disarmament, but a bargain incidental to the revival of a separate entente, its effect upon the significance attached to the Pact must be disastrous. The rumours in the French Press have already done untold damage in France itself, in Germany, and in the United States. If it is any consideration of mere diplomatic prudery which prevents the Foreign Office from publishing the text of the compromise, or at the very least, a clear official précis, together with a definite, emphatic denial of the alleged secret understanding, they stand convinced of a distorted sense of values which bodes ill for their capacity to assist in giving actuality to the provisions of the Pact itself.

THE CHALLENGE TO PROHIBITION

WHATEVER the results of the Presidential election, it is already clear that Governor Smith's candidature will leave a mark upon American politics. In accepting the Democratic nomination, he has expressed himself on Prohibition with a challenging emphasis, which has frightened many of his supporters, and surprised everyone. In the first place, he proposes an amendment of the Volstead Act so as to enable each State to define for itself, subject to a maximum to be fixed by the Congress, the percentage of alcohol which shall be held to constitute intoxicating liquor. This has for long commended itself to anti-Prohibitionists as the most feasible way round the Eighteenth Amendment; and its unconcealed purpose is to permit, on a local option basis, the consumption of light wines and beer. But Governor Smith puts this forward only as an interim policy which would give "some immediate relief." He advises an alteration in the Eighteenth Amendment itself, which would empower each State, after a local referendum, "to import, manufacture, or cause to be manufactured, and sell alcoholic beverages, sale to be made only by the State itself, and not for consumption in any public place."

All commentators are impressed by the boldness of this declaration; the *MANCHESTER GUARDIAN* New York correspondent describes it as "a piece of unparalleled audacity." It seems to be the general opinion that Governor Smith has thereby forfeited whatever chance he may have had of winning the election. But Governor Smith has never been charged with a deficiency of political acumen. He would hardly have spoken out so uncompromisingly, and thereby departed from the American tradition that it is a mistake to take a definite line on a real issue, unless he had judged that he stood a chance of rallying more support than he would lose. It is clear enough that he is taking a big risk; it is equally clear that, with the odds in any case against him, his best course is to run big risks. But the fact remains—and it is a very important fact—that one of the shrewdest judges of opinion in the United States has decided that there is at least a chance that he may benefit by the most outspoken expression of his anti-Prohibition views.

It is true, of course, that Governor Smith would not have the power, even if elected, to carry out the changes which he recommends. The amendment of the Volstead Act would be a matter for Congress; an alteration of the Eighteenth Amendment would have to run a very difficult gauntlet indeed. None the less, it is evident that the victory of Governor Smith, after this declaration, would mark the defeat of Prohibition as a national policy in the United States. It would represent a popular verdict which would put effective enforcement finally out of the question and would leave it only a matter of time until the Volstead Act at least was amended in the sense of allowing light wine and beer. Prohibition must thus inevitably become the central issue of the forthcoming campaign; and the world will watch the result with the keenest interest.

For the future of Prohibition in America has an interest for the outside world, such as domestic issues rarely have. Never before in modern history, on any comparable scale, has so flagrant a challenge been thrown down to the principle of liberty in matters of personal conduct as that embodied in the Eighteenth Amendment. The consumption of alcohol is not, like an addiction to drugs in Western countries, the exotic vice of a tiny minority, which can be checked by law without the great mass of people being conscious of any interference. It is a widely spread

and deeply rooted habit, and, in the majority of cases, a comparatively innocuous one. The extensive havoc for which intemperance is undoubtedly responsible does not alter the facts that most people who drink alcohol do not drink it to excess, and that occasional or moderate drinking is not only essentially harmless, but that certain positive advantages can seriously be urged on its behalf, such as contributing to social amenity, and affording at times to the individual a needed psychological release. The dangers associated with drinking are sufficient to justify the special regulation of the drink trade, and opinions will differ as to how far the State may go, consistently with respect for personal liberty, in such directions as early closing hours and the deterrent taxation of alcohol. But if the principle of personal liberty is not flouted outrageously by the attempt, at one blow, by legal prohibition, to make drinking altogether impossible, we do not know what meaning can be attached to it.

If, accordingly, this crude and colossal experiment had proved an unquestionable success, it would have gone ill with the principle of personal liberty. Political ideas throughout the world would have been profoundly modified, and the whole code of maxims as to the folly of trying to improve people's morals by coercion would have been thrown upon the scrap-heap. No one can claim that Prohibition has been an unquestionable success; the question is rather whether its failure cannot fairly be said to have been already demonstrated. For the claim of the Prohibitionists that there is on the whole decidedly less drinking in the United States than there used to be, with beneficial results to the general prosperity and health, can hardly be regarded as a satisfactory reply to the now undisputed facts that drinking is still extremely prevalent, and especially so among the young, with whom it has become a point of honour to get liquor, that it is associated with a huge, illicit industry of "bootlegging, with wholesale police corruption, and with a general and demoralizing disrespect for law, and that there does not appear to be the smallest prospect along the lines of enforcement of any improvement in this state of things.

Governor Smith's declaration may be audacious; but his policy seems, to British eyes, moderate and reasonable. It would by no means restore the pre-Prohibition situation. The abolition of the "saloon" would remain. On the other hand, his policy would offer a fair prospect of eliminating the "bootlegger" by what appears to be the only feasible means, namely, by eliminating the demand for his services. To eliminate the "bootlegger" without restoring the "saloon" is what is wanted; and Governor Smith's programme would therefore seem calculated to make a strong appeal to reasonable and thoughtful men. The real alternatives before the United States are whether there shall be a relaxation of the law along such lines as he advocates, or an indefinite continuance of the present virulent and profoundly harmful lawlessness. And since the latter alternative must surely come increasingly to be regarded as intolerable, Governor Smith's policy seems likely to triumph in the end.

Whether he is wise, from the standpoint of the election in November, to proclaim it now is another matter. But he has at least rendered a service to American political life by introducing a real and clear-cut issue into a Presidential contest. Nothing is more puzzling to British observers than the absence of any relation between political outlooks and party affiliations in the United States, so that it is impossible to draw any inference as to the views which a man holds from knowing the party to which he belongs. This state of things would hardly survive many candidatures by Governor Smith.

THE NEW CENSORSHIP

THE suppression of Miss Radclyffe Hall's novel "The Well of Loneliness" may not appear at first sight to be a matter of general importance or to concern anyone beyond the author and her publishers. But in effect it has struck an insidious blow at the liberties of the public, and further attacks may be anticipated unless an effective protest can be made now.

The facts are, briefly, as follows. About a fortnight ago the book was read and disliked by the editor of the SUNDAY EXPRESS. It dealt, in his opinion, with a subject that should not be mentioned in public, and he accordingly proceeded to give it all possible publicity. He could, had he chosen, have sent it with a private note to the Home Office, requesting them to set the machinery of the law in motion, and had they declined to do this he could then have referred to the matter in his columns. But good copy is not easy to come by at this season; and it is not surprising that he preferred another and a more sensational course. In a front-page article, written at the top of his voice, he brought knowledge of the book to thousands of homes, and upon another page he published statements from the leading lending libraries, to the effect that the book was obtainable on their shelves. "I would rather," he wrote, "give a healthy boy or a healthy girl a phial of prussic acid than this novel." Having indicated to them the nature of the poison and how it could be most easily procured, he held his peace. We may not agree either with his opinion or with the method he took to promulgate it, but he had, of course, a perfect right to both. From the legal point of view (and that alone now concerns us) there was nothing objectionable in his action. The attack upon the public liberties was delivered from another quarter.

On the following day (Monday, August 20th) a letter from the publishers, Messrs. Jonathan Cape, appeared in an allied journal, the DAILY EXPRESS. It was, on the surface, a civilized and a courageous letter. The publishers assert their faith in the decency and sincerity of the book, they recount the care they had taken, both by the format and the advertisements, to repel the pruriently minded, and they declare that they will not withdraw it at the behest of the SUNDAY EXPRESS. But these fine phrases merely cover their complete collapse. They do fulfil the behest of the EXPRESS. They promise, because of the attack, to send copies to the Home Office and to the Public Prosecutor, and they undertake in advance to withdraw the volume if the Home Office objects. In other words, they appeal to a Government office for a judgment which could only properly be delivered by a court of law. And if their conduct is unusual, so is that of the Home Office. It does object, it asks them to discontinue publication, and the book is condemned as obscene by an authority which has no legal right whatever to pronounce upon such a point.

The affair has, no doubt, its humorous side. The book was not suppressed until the Friday, and it is somewhat entertaining to think of the EXPRESS readers lining up at the bookshops for their prussic acid on the Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and of their bitter disappointment when the draught at last reached their lips. For it is a serious book, not to say a solid one, and it is unlikely that many of them managed to get through more than twenty pages of it. But in other ways the situation is far from humorous. The rights of the public have been betrayed. The fact that Miss Radclyffe Hall is a writer of refinement and distinction, the fact that her previous novel won European recognition, the fact that her present novel is weightily prefaced by Mr. Havelock Ellis and has been favourably reviewed not only in these columns,

but in the TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT, the SUNDAY TIMES, the SATURDAY REVIEW, the MORNING POST, the DAILY TELEGRAPH, and elsewhere—these all are facts, but they are beside the main point. The point is that the book has never been put on its trial, it has never had such a chance of justice as the British Courts provide, it has been condemned unheard by the Home Secretary, to whom Messrs. Jonathan Cape appealed because they were afraid of the SUNDAY EXPRESS.

The episode may have serious consequences. Newspapers love to display their power, and vie with one another in the attempt to impress the world with a sense of the great influence which they wield. The revelation that (so far as appearances are concerned) a single article in the SUNDAY EXPRESS can cause the almost immediate suppression of a book is not unlikely to stimulate rival newspapers to emulate this remarkable achievement. This, at any rate, is a possibility with which any publisher will now have to reckon in considering whether to publish a book against which a popular outcry might conceivably be raised. Important books which would represent a real addition to our national literature may thus be denied publication, although their suppression would not be warranted on any reasonable interpretation of the law. For the line between what is permissible and what is not permissible under the new censorship is uncertain and undefined. It will be drawn in accordance with the estimate formed by publishers of the calculations likely to be made by editors as to whether an onslaught on the book under consideration promises a successful "stunt."

LIFE AND POLITICS

I THINK that Sir Austen Chamberlain is himself largely to blame for the mischief that is being done in America by the forged letter. An early and public statement from him on the exact meaning of the Anglo-French naval agreement would have left no scope for ingenious fabrications. Semi-official assurances, such as "diplomatic correspondents" obtain in the Foreign Office are not good enough. If it is merely a matter of an agreement upon a formula for naval reduction in preparation for the Geneva discussions, why should we not all know about it direct from the Foreign Secretary? Innocence that hides itself in ambiguity cannot complain if it is taken by the suspicious—and political man is a suspicious animal—for guilt. This is a particularly vicious forgery, and it is hopeless now to overtake the harm that is being done in America, where the NEW YORK WORLD undertook the responsibility of publishing news of it. Any expert here knows at a glance that it is an impudent invention; but all Americans cannot be expected to know that Sir Austen does not begin a letter to M. Briand, written in English, with "Mon cher Briand," or sign it "Chamberlain." The letter is being excitedly accepted by multitudes of inexperienced folk in America as proof positive that the British and the French, once more at the old game of secret understandings, have concluded a military alliance at sea, and this at the moment when they are hypocritically signing Mr. Kellogg's pact. The Foreign Office would do better to deny the substance of the letter by making the long overdue official statement than merely to put forth proofs that the letter is bogus. The terror of wholesome publicity which seems to afflict Foreign Ministers is in these times as anachronistic as the absolutism which, according to some people, finds its last refuge in high (and dry) diplomacy.

I am informed by those who know more about these things than I do, that Mr. Frank H. Simonds is the writer on foreign affairs with most influence in the United States. It is therefore especially important that what he has to say in interpreting European feeling about the Presidential election should correspond to the facts. I have just read an article by him on that subject in the *AMERICAN REVIEW OF REVIEWS*. I can only say that Mr. Simonds's impressions of feeling in the poor benighted old world at any rate are singularly different from my own. Mr. Simonds has discovered things about what he might call our reaction to the contest of Hoover *v.* Smith which are new and strange to me. He has discovered, for instance, that most Europeans "look forward hopefully to a Republican defeat." Why? Because, according to this interpreter, we think that if Smith is elected there may be a chance of a revision of the debt payments to America. Mr. Simonds pictures Europe hanging breathlessly on the issue of the Presidential election because the election of Hoover would mean that America will "stick to a policy of pitiless pursuit of the debtor." We are all, it seems, making a last effort to persuade the U.S.A. that their debt policy is unjust, ungenerous, and impracticable, knowing that it would be hopeless to approach President Hoover with any appeal to sentiment. The writer adds some remarks about British dislike of Hoover as the embodiment of the dreaded American efficiency. I can only say that the article which I have roughly summarized appears to me to be completely mistaken as an account of English feeling about the election. I have met no one who hopes for the defeat of Hoover on these grounds, and I flatly disbelieve that anyone here of any importance really believes that the election of Al Smith would mean an easier bargain over debts. There is very little interest in the Presidential election, and what little exists is concerned with the battle of Wet and Dry.

Occasionally when one has ventured in talk to comment upon the working of Prohibition and the wide disregard of the law, an American has retorted "What about your motor speed limit?" To this *tu quoque* it is, I think, difficult to find a good reply. The legal speed limit is not only not generally observed, but everyone knows that it is not, and indeed should not be, generally observed. To enforce it strictly would at once reduce the traffic of the country to hopeless congestion and chaos. The Transport Ministry, with its customary inanity, has just introduced a new speed limit for pneumatic-tyred vehicles of over two tons—that is, for practical purposes, the motor coaches, and some of the goods transport motors. Now it is perfectly well known to the authorities that while the old twelve mile per hour limit was farcical, the new twenty mile limit is a mere concession on paper, and only accentuates the prevalent hypocrisy on the subject. The long-distance motor-coach services admittedly exceed twenty miles an hour over part of their routes; goods carriers, travelling usually in the night, do the same. Both will continue to run at what they consider an economic speed, and if the police attempt to enforce the new limit the mass resistance will be effective, just as the attempt to enforce Prohibition in America fails when it comes up against mass evasion.

Mr. Neville Chamberlain is one of the puzzles of this Government. He is credited by his friends with a superior capacity for getting things done—and by his critics with his skill and determination as a "stonewaller." He can in fact present a more efficient barrier to change than any other administrative chief. Take a little instance of his negative efficiency that has got into the papers this week. Recently, the Manchester Board of Guardians decided to

make a donation of a thousand pounds to the Cancer Research Campaign. Perhaps the Manchester Guardians had taken to heart the exhortations of eminent scientists who are always quoting to local authorities the sensible if trite maxim that prevention is better than cure. Public authorities are spending vast sums on various kinds of curative treatment of disease. They commonly ignore the common-sense argument that one-tenth of the money spent on research would pay them handsomely in the future. However, the Manchester Guardians have been promptly rapped on the knuckles by the Health Minister. They are not to be allowed to help cancer research, because cancer research is not specifically mentioned among the kinds of charitable effort to which, under a recent Act, Guardians are allowed to contribute. This is red tape of the regulation pattern. As soon as a local authority shows a little vision, or a desire to do something useful in an unconventional way, there is usually some Tory Minister in Whitehall ready with a legal ruling designed to teach them to be intelligent at their peril.

There has been another discreditable row at a R.S.P.C.A. meeting. These shindies, which seem to please the bellicose element in the Society, must inflict serious injury upon its position and usefulness. I am no friend, politically, of Lord Banbury, but I must deplore the ugly fanaticism of the attacks made upon him. There is something irrational in it. If a majority of the members do not like him as chairman, they can unseat him in the proper constitutional manner; to raise a frantic storm every time he presides—as he is perfectly within his rights in doing—is foolish and grossly intolerant. Unless I am much mistaken, Lord Banbury, during his thirty years in Parliament, did a great deal more for the protection of animals—some animals at any rate—than most of those who shriek when he appears on the platform. I feel safe on principle in objecting to any sort of meeting being turned into a bear garden by a party with a grievance: such tactics are the death of democracy in the R.S.P.C.A., or in any other movement. And what about the non-combatants who come to these meetings to hear what Lord Banbury has to say in defence of the changes he and his Council wish to introduce? Apparently they count for nothing against the virtuous fury of a group of men and women who, whether they are right or wrong on the issue, should know better as haters of cruelty than to enjoy the sport of President-baiting. I do not wish to dogmatize about the immediate—not, I understand, the real—cause of the disturbance, but on general grounds I see no reason why the body of members as a whole should not be consulted, or why it is democratic to allow everything to be decided by those members who happen to be able to attend meetings in London.

The usually peaceful columns of the *TIMES* have been clamorous of late with protests against noise. There is a vague idea that the Government ought to do something, but what it should do is less obvious than the wailful agonies of the sufferers. The nuisance of noise is as old as city life. Horace, as we may surmise from a famous line, would have joined the correspondents to the *TIMES* who fill columns with their wails. Let us distinguish for a moment. I doubt myself whether the noise of London—apart from enormities like the electric picks—is much worse in the motor than in the horse age. There is no racket more disastrous than that of a horse lorry on a stone road, e.g., the Manchester granite setts. In calm Victorian days, John Leech was driven almost mad by the hurdy-gurdies. In any case, the worst offenders are not the motors, but the trams; one tram probably creates

more din than a score of motor-cars. And it is fair to remember that the greatest peril of the road to the mere pedestrian is precisely the silent car. I have had many narrow shaves in London streets, but none narrower than from the stealthy onset of some luxurious car that gave no warning of its lethal approach. The sufferers from noise are probably a small minority. Most people seem to like noise in the streets; otherwise why is there always a blissful crowd round the electric drills in the streets, and why do villagers—as I have seen—gather to enjoy the roar and tumult of passing traffic? This is not to say that the sensitive minority have not a grievance, or that life is not being made more difficult for them. Noise nowadays is more diffused; it is harder to get away from it, though if we are to make out a black list of nuisances I would put the ugliness, monotony, and danger of the modern motor-cursed highway above its noise in the scale of evils.

In a long experience of silly season newspaper stunts I do not recall one more silly and gratuitous than the fuss about the (alleged) lost Rector of Doddinghurst. Fleet Street for about a week gleefully turned itself into a megaphone for the dissemination of baseless village gossip. The "popular" Press made itself supremely ridiculous. No rumour was too sinister or too absurd to be excitedly debated down dozens of deplorable columns. It was all due, as a clergyman colleague of the unfortunate victim of publicity said, to the "peril of thinking aloud." And all the time the Rector was taking a holiday in Canada, as he was entitled to do without consulting all the busybodies and amateur sleuths of newspaperland. There was simply nothing in it—nothing except the anxiety of "the Street" to find a sensation, any sensation, with which to fill the vacuum of the off month. There was not, and had never been the slightest mystery which it was anybody's business outside a limited circle to bother about. The hunt for mare's nests is becoming a national industry—depressing but not depressed.

KAPPA.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MR. WELLS AND THE LIBERAL PARTY

SIR,—Mr. Francis Birrell finds a certain passage in "Mr. Blettsworthy on Rampole Island" remarkable, because, he says, it was written at the moment I was joining the Liberal Party. But I have never joined any Liberal Party.—Yours, &c.,

H. G. WELLS.

614, St. Ermins, S.W.1.
August 25th, 1928.

THE ANGLO-FRENCH NAVAL AGREEMENT

SIR,—I am not sure that you are quite justified in saying that this affair "is being handled on both sides of the Channel with almost unbelievable stupidity." I should rather be inclined to say that it has been handled by the Foreign Office with characteristic duplicity and by the Quai d'Orsay with equally characteristic candour, and that both are wise from their respective points of view. The Foreign Office is naturally as eager to conceal from the British public as the Quai d'Orsay is to reveal to the French public what is in fact a capitulation of the British Admiralty and the British Government and the greatest triumph for French diplomacy since the signature of the Peace Treaties. It is in particular a triumph for M. Philippe Berthelot, whose visit to London was indeed a success. It is true that he owes something to the cordial co-operation of Sir William Tyrrell, who is on the way to become a French national hero. It is alleged here—and I have no difficulty in believing it—that

the French Government has no objection at all to the publication of the text of the naval compromise and that the British Government is solely responsible for the refusal to publish it.

To avoid any misunderstanding I should say that I do not for a moment suggest that the naval agreement itself was drafted during M. Berthelot's visit to London. It is a purely technical agreement between the naval staffs of the two countries, which was signed or concluded in Paris on July 28th, two days before Sir Austen Chamberlain made his announcement in the House of Commons. But the importance of this technical agreement or compromise is less in its actual text—although that is far from being unimportant—than in the informal and unwritten understanding of which it is the outward and visible sign.

The provisions of the actual naval compromise are now pretty well known, and the publication of its text would no doubt merely confirm the information given by the French semi-official Press, but it would make it impossible for the Foreign Office to continue the issue of evasive and equivocal half-denials. The fullest account of the terms of the compromise was that given in a semi-official communication published in the *MATIN* of August 11th, known by everybody to have been supplied to that paper by the Quai d'Orsay or the Ministry of Marine. This account may, I am convinced, be accepted as accurate, even if it was not quite complete, and it differs little from that given in your leader of August 19th. The difference is that, according to the *MATIN*, the cruisers to be limited are, not those with guns "ranging from 6-in. to 8-in.," as you said, but those with guns of a calibre exceeding 6-in. and not exceeding 8-in., so that cruisers with guns not above 6-in. are included in the unlimited category of light cruisers. I have seen, by the way, no semi-official French communiqué suggesting that no limitation is proposed on any cruisers under 10,000 tons, and there must have been some error or misunderstanding in the English Press if this impression has been given. On the contrary, it has been said here from the first that the compromise applies only to cruisers not exceeding 10,000 tons, which are divided into two categories, one limited and the other unlimited, according to the calibre of their guns, as already mentioned. Warships of more than 10,000 tons are "capital ships" already limited by the Washington Convention which the Anglo-French agreement does not directly affect, although, for a reason that will be stated, it affects it in practice indirectly.

The *MATIN* further said—and I believe it to be true—that the compromise proposes complete parity between all the Powers as regards the two categories to be limited—the cruisers already mentioned and submarines of more than 600 tons. I believe it to be true because it seems to me incredible that the French Government would be so foolish as to issue untrue statements, the falsity of which could at once be demonstrated by the publication of the actual text, which that Government apparently desires. It must be the Government opposed to publication that has something to hide. It should be understood in England that the information given in the French Press has not been mere irresponsible gossip, but has been supplied by the French Government. It has been given only in the semi-official papers, and the complete silence of the Radical and Socialist Press about the matter is perhaps as ominous as the loquacity of the semi-official Press. It is probable that the writers in the semi-official Press have in some cases seen the text of the compromise.

There appears to be some misunderstanding in England as regards the French interpretation of the compromise. The semi-official declarations in London that there is no formal or written alliance and that the naval agreement contains no secret clauses are beside the point. Nobody in France has ever suggested anything of the sort. What has been said here by writers of the highest standing and competence is that the agreement which, as the *MATIN* said, gives France "complete liberty of construction" for all the craft that matter to her, necessarily implies an informal and unwritten understanding, amounting to a "pooling" of the British and French fleets, so that every ton constructed by the navy of either country will be available for the protection of the other. As the *Times* put it, the abandonment by the British Admiralty of its opposition to the craft that it most feared means "co-operation" between the two

navies. The most definite and detailed exposition of this effect of the compromise was that given in the *JOURNAL DES DÉBATS* on August 9th by the eminent naval expert, M. René La Bruyère, who said that the compromise brought about "a strategic combination of function amounting in all but name to the naval merger that existed between France and Great Britain before the war." M. La Bruyère does not say things of this sort without justification. What reason is there for doubting his word, especially in face of the silence of the British Foreign Office and the British Admiralty? In short, what is said here is that Lord Grey's pre-war tactics, as expounded by him to M. Paul Cambon in 1906, have been exactly repeated. There is no written alliance, no formal naval convention other than this "compromise," but there is an unwritten alliance which will be put into practice by constant "conversations" between the Admiralty and the French naval staff, not a mere "exchange of information." And we are as much tied to France as we were when it was agreed to keep the British fleet in the Channel and the French in the Mediterranean.

It is not surprising that naval experts all over the world seem to accept this interpretation of the agreement. The Admiralty has consistently held that French submarines were a danger to Great Britain. At the Washington Conference the British representatives demanded the entire suppression of submarines on the ground that they were purely offensive weapons of use only for sinking merchant shipping, and the French could not seriously contest that view, although of course they opposed the abolition of the offensive weapons—for excellent reasons. It has been frankly avowed here that the potential enemy against which the French navy, according to "an old tradition," is directed is Great Britain, and French naval experts claim that France is already in a position to blockade Great Britain with her submarines. They have pointed out in detail how easy such an operation would be in the case of a country divided from France by a narrow Channel so that the French submarines need never go far from their base. Naval experts naturally conclude that, when the British Admiralty agrees that France should have unlimited submarines of not more than 600 tons and as many larger ones as Great Britain, either there is a secret understanding amounting in everything but name to an alliance, or the British Admiralty has suddenly gone mad, and they think the former hypothesis the more probable. What everybody in France and elsewhere—except apparently in England—believes is that the Admiralty has yielded to blackmail or, let us say, "chantage," which sounds more polite.

Inevitably this naval understanding involves a general revival of the pre-war Entente. I would point out that one statement made from the first by the French semi-official Press—that France has been given a free hand in the matter of land armaments—is now admitted by the Foreign Office to be true. This means no disarmament on land, for the French view is that France has done all she can in the matter of disarmament by reducing the period of military service to eighteen months and, eventually, if and when certain conditions are fulfilled, to a year—and at the same time increasing her professional army. And the naval compromise means in fact no disarmament on sea—merely the Anglo-French command of the seas at a reduced cost.

Clearly, if the British and French navies are in future to be one in practice, if, as has been said here, the French fleet is restored by this agreement "to the very first rank among the fleets of the world," there is an indirect infringement in practice of the Washington Convention, and that is one of the reasons of the American attitude towards the agreement. The semi-official announcement in London that the agreement will become effective only if it be accepted by the other Powers is again beside the point. Naturally, if the other Powers do not accept it, it will not become a basis for what is humorously described as disarmament, but that will not affect the understanding of which it is a symptom.

Other symptoms of that understanding are very evident. One of them is the *non possumus* of the French Government in the matter of the evacuation of the Rhineland, about which France has no doubt been given a free hand. Another was the Anglo-French attitude towards the Kellogg Pact. The

most puzzling aspect of the understanding is its one-sided character. So far as one can see, we give everything and get nothing. The only hypothesis that occurs to me is that the British author or authors of this understanding believe Great Britain to be a declining Power whose only future is in a close attachment to the strongest military Power in Europe. But if we need to lean on some other Power, would not the United States have been a wiser choice?

As to the effect of the understanding on the international situation and on the internal situation in Germany, one shudders at the possibilities. The *FRANKFURTER ZEITUNG* hardly went too far in saying the other day that there was no longer room for hope. And it seems to me that the *MANCHESTER GUARDIAN* is right in describing the Anglo-French agreement as a betrayal of the cause of disarmament and peace. The Allied Governments have shown by the conditions that they imposed on Germany what they believe to be the conditions of real disarmament. If they are sincere, let them apply those conditions to themselves, all of them, including the abolition of conscription, submarines, and military and naval air forces. If they will not do that, let them honestly say that they are against disarmament and dissolve that organized hypocrisy, the Geneva Disarmament Commission.—Yours, &c.,

ROBERT DELL.

Paris, August 25th, 1928.

P.S.—By way of no doubt of demonstrating French sincerity in the matter of disarmament, M. Poincaré announces a large increase in the French army and navy estimates for next year to be used for a further increase in the professional army, more submarines, an "important effort" in regard to the naval air force, the fortification of the new French eastern frontier, and other equally pacific purposes.

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

SIR,—Surely there is a serious fallacy in your article in the present issue headed "How Does Free Trade Stand?" You say—in effect—that the argument we Free Traders use that goods and services pay for goods imported is unsound, and you justify this assertion by a reference to floating balances. Briefly summed up this means that goods and services do not pay for imported goods by return of post, a fact surely known to every intelligent Free Trader!

It is possible, of course, for imports from abroad to lead to investment of capital here, but when this is triumphantly named by our opponents as a drawback to Free Trade it is well to wait for a sentence or two until our Protectionist opponents (still triumphantly) point out that Protection has caused the Michelin people (for instance) to sink capital here and so "bring employment to England."

You specify a possible protective tax against steel, and (after referring to the obvious drawback to English exporters who had to buy dearer raw material) you then say "we are not entitled to assume that there would be an additional handicap, arising from the proposition that imports are paid for by exports and operating through some mysterious and indefinable chain of causation upon exports in general."

I am free to admit, sir, that this reads to me like the writings of a Mystagogue.

There is nothing indefinable about the receipt of foreign steel—the payment by cheque on English balance, the purchase (misleadingly termed exchange) by some foreigner of the English balance for the only purpose for which it can be used—that is for purchase in Britain of some British article or service to clear the debt and complete the exchange. This exchange can be delayed—and considerably delayed—but do you suggest that its permanent holding up can mean anything except that we have had the foreign article given?—Yours, &c.,

RONALD F. WALKER.

Fir Cottage, Mirfield.

August 27th, 1928.

[We mean that we may have had it lent; and that this need not be the essentially short-period adjustment which Mr. Walker implies, but may represent an enduring change in the flow of international investment. In other words, the "delay" in the completion of the exchange, which Mr. Walker admits, may be so "considerable" as to be the real essence of the matter.—ED., NATION.]

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

SIR,—In your leading article "How Does Free Trade Stand?" in your last issue, you seem to imply that the main argument for a Free Trade policy depends on the effect its adoption will have on other countries, and that the economic arguments for it *per se* have now greatly diminished force.

You base this on the fact that:—

"It is quite erroneous to suppose that a given curtailment of commodity imports must necessarily involve a corresponding curtailment of commodity exports. It may merely involve an alteration in the balance of international indebtedness."

This is perfectly true; but you go on to say:—

"Thus, moreover, is all that it is *likely* to involve, except in so far as the curtailment of imports is directly prejudicial to our exporting industries."

In other words, a curtailment of imports will make us willing to increase our investments abroad to the same extent as imports have been curtailed. This seems to me to be very improbable when the curtailment is due to Protection. It seems far more probable that the purchasing power set free by the diminished consumption of imports will be spent on home goods to replace those previously imported. Thus the net effect would be an increase in home production and a corresponding diminution of exports (though with a time-lag).

You also imply that if the imports which are curtailed are finished articles not entering into any home production, then their curtailment will have no effect on exports. This follows from the statement that "We are not entitled to assume that there would be an additional handicap, arising from the proposition that imports are paid for by exports, and operating through some mysterious and indefinable chain of causation upon exports in general."

This causation was laid down by the classical economists as follows:—

Starting from a state of equilibrium (i.e., imports and exports balancing) imports are checked and therefore an excess of exports results, which are paid for by gold. This inflow of gold causes prices to rise in England and fall elsewhere. This will stimulate imports and check exports until equilibrium is again reached—with a reduced volume of foreign trade.

What modifications must be introduced to make it applicable to the present day? Mr. D. H. Robertson has pointed out two:—

"(1) The gold flow may not occur:—

"(a) it may be used to increase foreign investments. It has been argued above that this is very unlikely to result from Protection.

"(b) it may simply be stored and not allowed to produce any effect on prices (as e.g., by the Federal Reserve Board since 1920). This amounts to making presents to foreign consumers of our exports.

"(2) The gold flow may occur, but its effect may be restricted to home prices."

That is, domestic prices may rise but not export prices. This means even lower profits and wages in the export trades than at present prevail, simply in order that we may produce goods for ourselves less effectively than we could produce exports to exchange for them. Even so the demand for our exports would fall off partly because the general price levels abroad would have fallen and partly because owing to our increased import duties foreigners would be unable to offer as great a volume of goods in exchange for ours as heretofore. Thus, so far as Protection is concerned, the chain of causation enunciated by the classical economists would still seem to hold.—Yours, &c., F. W. BACON.

110, Old Park Ridings, N.21.

[Before gold flows, something else happens. If there is an excess of imports, in Mr. Bacon's sense, so that it is towards gold-export point that the foreign exchanges are tending, money-rates are increased, with the object and effect of attracting international balances, and so averting the outflow of gold. This effect is immediate and powerful. Thus there is a clear causal connection between an excess of imports and a change in the balance of international indebtedness. The effect is exerted first on floating balances, but it tends to translate itself into a change in long-period

indebtedness, by making the country in question a less attractive centre in which to raise new loans, and in other similar ways.

International borrowing and lending transactions are on so large a scale nowadays, and are so susceptible to movements in relative interest rates that such reactions are, we suggest, fully capable of meeting any change in the volume of imports, within the limits of reasonable likelihood, occurring as the result of tariffs or otherwise. In other words, we suggest that, for moderate changes in the import volume, the "classical" reactions mentioned by Mr. Bacon are intercepted by the cushion of international indebtedness and do not actually work through to exports. That certainly is the moral suggested by our post-war experience, with its undiminished imports and its largely diminished exports. But, if the "classical" reactions do come into play, we must remember that they are not necessarily consoling. Mr. Bacon describes the chain of causation thus: diminished imports, an inflow of gold, higher internal prices, diminished exports. Well, this implies a condition of active trade and employment, which it would seem absurd just now to treat as a danger to be avoided. But the more probable *modus operandi*, having regard to our present balance of trade, would be that a check to imports might serve to avert an otherwise inevitable outflow of gold, leading to credit restriction and renewed deflation. A deflation severe enough to break prices and wages in the sheltered trades would, no doubt, stimulate exports in the theoretical long run. But the process might well entail so much incidental friction as to defeat this purpose, and result in our ultimately squaring the international account by a diminished importation of the necessities of life. It is clearly not a good argument against a policy of checking imports that it might avert this sequence of reactions.

We feel bound, as a matter of intellectual integrity, to explain ourselves thus fully and candidly in response to our critics' challenge. But we should like to guard ourselves against misunderstanding. We would not have it thought that tariffs would be unlikely in practice to do serious damage to our export trade. We are questioning only the validity of the "imports are paid for by exports" argument. The direct prejudice which a tariff, say, on steel would cause to our exporting industries is obvious and very formidable. Nor can we agree with Mr. Bacon's suggestion that no similar tangible harm can result from the taxation of imported consumers' goods. Finally, we do not just throw in the World Economic Conference argument in a perfunctory spirit. The plasticity of the international tariff position is, in our view, the governing factor in the present situation; and it seems to us to deserve an attention and an emphasis which it does not at present get.—ED., NATION.]

THE SAFEGUARDING OF STEEL.

SIR,—I am afraid Mr. Walls' argument leaves my doubts unsolved.

That a safeguarding duty on steel must involve makers and users of steel goods in some loss is unfortunately almost certain. It can only be avoided if the cheapening of costs through increased output should bring British steel right down to the Continental level, and this seems improbable.

But is it certain that this loss will not be outweighed, from a national point of view, by the gain to producers of coal, iron, and steel? The conclusive reply I ask for must demonstrate *this*.

Our coal deposits are the national treasure by means of which our industrial success has been built up through more than a century. It is no light matter to be shutting down unexhausted pits, in many cases for ever, while the men who might be working them stand idle, and good plant rusts. Surely it is worth some sacrifice to save them?

Only to-day I read that Blidworth Colliery, opened but two years ago, and equipped with the most modern plant, is shutting down. Yet it is quite possible that as the result of further development of the pulverization and low temperature carbonization processes we may, a few years hence, need most of the mines now being closed and find ourselves unable to recover them, the cost of reopening flooded pits being very heavy.

Nor do I think that such reasonable action on our part would have the disastrous effect on the cause of European Free Trade which, in your leading article, you anticipate. Free Trade has never been a dogma to be enforced at all times and at all costs. Did not Adam Smith admit that national defence must come first when necessary? And is not the protection of our coal-fields from impending disaster a measure of national defence?

Let us by all means continue to wage war on safeguarding of the petty and futile description, but let us keep an open mind for special cases, and in particular be prepared to support a fair trial of the policy of safeguarding steel on the clear understanding that if it prove too costly it will be abandoned.—Yours, &c.,

OSWALD EARP.

24, The Chase, S.W.4.
August 24th, 1928.

THE SUPPRESSION OF "THE WELL OF LONELINESS"

SIR,—It is a pity that the case of "The Well of Loneliness" was not fought out in the Courts. If it had been, authors, publishers, and the general reader would have known their legal position better than they do now.

I read the book before hearing of any attack on it, and the announcement of its withdrawal astonished me. I inquired of my subscription library whether they would continue to circulate the copies they held, and was told that they would not, the reason given being "the Home Secretary's order."

What, sir, is this new government of literature by order of the Home Secretary? Has a system of *lettres de cachet* been set up under which, without charge preferred or legal trial made, any book which happens to displease the Home Secretary for the time being may be arrested and hidden away from its parents and friends in some literary Bastille? If so, what has become of the freedom of the Press?

The law forbids "indecent or obscene" books. What is the test of indecency and obscenity? Surely it is not the theme of the book but the treatment of the theme. The law forbids blasphemy and prescribes penalties for those who by writing deny the truths of Christianity, but the test of legal blasphemy is whether the Christian religion is treated with scurrility: if one is polite enough it may be denied with impunity. The law regards sexual intercourse except between husband and wife as immoral, but will anyone suggest that a novel, which describes the joys and sorrows, fears and problems, of two unmarried lovers, could (even in England) be condemned as indecent and obscene? If it could, there would be few novels left unbanned.

I say with confidence that "The Well of Loneliness" treats its theme with the greatest delicacy and discretion, and when a member of the Government in the exercise of his office applies to the book the epithets "indecent and obscene" (and it is only thus that he has any ground for interference) he not only exposes us to the ridicule of more enlightened peoples, but also runs counter to what I venture to submit is the true interpretation of the law he administers.

I alluded above to the general reader. How is he concerned? In this, that every man has the right, if not the duty, to form his own judgment on the problems of life and, as a corollary, the right to have all possible information to guide him. What is he to think of men and women of the type described in "The Well of Loneliness"? There are many answers to the question, as no one who has dabbled ever so little in the ocean of its literature can deny. Is, then, the conscientious inquirer to be debarred by the ukase of the Home Secretary from having presented to him for consideration the point of view of the people chiefly concerned? And if on one subject, why not on all? It was once said, *Roma locuta est, causa finita est*. Have we discredited the Roman Pontiff only to accept the yoke of a pontifical Home Secretary?

May I conclude these questionings with the remark that "The Well of Loneliness," occupied as it is exclusively with the problems of women, deals with nothing that is an offence under English law.—Yours, &c.,

J. R. A. BRADLEY.

49, Princes Square, Hyde Park, W.2.

B.B.C. PRONUNCIATION

SIR,—It is curious that "Kappa" prefers the finicking, mincing sound of the short "a" in words like "pass" and "glass," to the noble sound of the long "a," and it is clear that he labours under what may be called "the 'r' delusion." This is evident from the fact that in spelling these words phonetically he gives the short "a" its correct accent (à), but instead of doing the same with the long "a" (â) he spells it "ar."

Two interesting questions arise: (1) Why does "Kappa" think that there is an "r" sound in the long "a"? and (2) Why is he prejudiced against that unfortunate liquid?

As to (1) the reason for the widespread delusion that the long "a" imports an "r" sound is, I think, the fact that many words that have no "r" sound in them in modern English are spelt with an "r," but I need not remind "Kappa" that the spelling of a word in English affords no clue to its pronunciation. In words like "mart" and "part," for instance, there is no "r" sound, any more than there is in "father," "Father" and "farther" are identical in pronunciation in English. In all these words there is simply the long "a" sound. In Scotland, of course, they do sound their pre-consonantal "r"s. It was very delightful to hear Professor Hetherington doing so in his wireless talks on "The Meaning of Good." But it is very difficult to do, and quite unnecessary and a waste of good breath.

As to (2) the prejudice against the unoffending liquid "r" is more difficult to explain, but it undoubtedly exists and is very regrettable. The consonant "r" in English is sounded (as a slight roll or trill) only on a following vowel, but it should be invariably sounded on that vowel, whether the vowel occurs in the same word or in a following word. The B.B.C. announcers are rather grave offenders in this respect—they are nearly all of them dreadfully afraid of sounding their final "r"s on the initial vowel of a following word. There is no occasion to introduce a euphonic "r" in such a phrase as "idea(r) of," but even that would be better than to omit the "r" sound on the "of" in such a phrase as "clear of," which the B.B.C. announcers invariably pronounce as "clea-of"—a hateful solecism.

Another hateful solecism which the B.B.C. announcers have adopted from the theatrical profession is the pronunciation of "girl" as "gal."—Yours, &c.,

J. C. GRAHAM.

Royal House, Dalston, Cumberland.
August 20th, 1928.

A NEW CHILDREN'S CHARTER

SIR,—The Home Secretary has recently expressed his hope that it may be expedient to improve the Children's Charter. As legislation to be effective must depend largely upon public opinion, inevitably slow to manifest itself, I venture to suggest that some of the reforms needed for safeguarding youth might embrace:—

- (a) Closure of prison walls to those under eighteen.
- (b) Abolition of night work for young persons.
- (c) Diminution of boys under sixteen in mines.
- (d) Shorter hours and better conditions for youths employed in hotels and restaurants.
- (e) Juvenile employment to be undertaken by the local education authorities.
- (f) The raising of school age.
- (g) Elimination as far as practical of promising boys from securing blind-alley occupations—by promoting their interests after the age they are discarded.

The messenger class I have in mind, as these lads are not always absorbed in work appropriate to their ability and character. I hope, sir, you will publish this letter and thus allow me to sow my seed to bear some fruit, I trust, in due season.—Yours, &c.,

D. HALLIDAY MACARTNEY.

23, Dartmouth Park Hill, N.W.5.

PITCH AND TOSS

THESE are things that can only happen in Spain. Only in that indulgent country would one be permitted to fish for goldfish in the fountains of a Royal palace, or play pitch and toss in the main thoroughfare of an ancient city. Both these things I have done, and if I could be sure of such another fishing expedition and such another game of skill, I would travel to Andalusia at any time when the weather was propitious for these open-air sports.

For the abiding impression of Southern Spain is one of indolent freedom. There every day is a birthday. There everyone may stay up, without reproach, long after their proper bed-time, and when they do go to rest, throw their clothes in untidy bundles on the bedroom floor and forget to say their prayers. In this El Dorado no one is expected to be in time for meals or to wash his face more than is positively convenient. If Spanish universities have Senate houses, no undergraduate would be forbidden to play marbles on their steps (a pettifogging restriction still imposed on their brothers of the University of Cambridge). For the Southern Spaniard is without that surplus energy which the citizens of harder nations devote to dragooning each other. All that he cares to expend is sufficient for his two main preoccupations, being elaborately polite to everyone he meets and having his boots cleaned.

I have never understood the Spaniard's fondness for his boots. He would have them, as his honour, spotless. Years of experience must have taught him that he has set before himself an ideal which can never be attained in a country in which every road has a covering of thick adhesive dust. But he spends patient hours every day and night trying to counteract the effects of this. He walks from his office to his club and has his boots cleaned, he walks from his club to his café and has his boots cleaned, he walks from his café to his theatre and has his boots cleaned. If he is "in for a night of it" he has his boots cleaned in every cabaret he enters. And in the morning, no doubt, somebody cleans his boots. These, by the way, are no perfunctory operations, but an honest to God four-pennyworth of spit and polish such as we can obtain ourselves outside our railway stations.

To those who do not share this craving, men of other nations who have been brought up to throw their boots on to the landing at night and leave it at that, he shows that easy tolerance which is his abiding characteristic. The French have always been praised for the blind eye they turn on the *faux pas* in language and deportment of their foreign visitors. The Spaniards open both eyes wide, and if they smile, they smile as if the amusement one was causing them was intended. They almost seem to say how good it is of these English to speak our language so abominably and cause us so much amusement.

When the first English expedition entered Tibet it is said that the potters scarcely looked up from their wheels. If the Spaniards ever feel surprise at the behaviour of *les faux anglais*, they never show it. They have the blessed gift of non-interference. Far from being the passionate, quick-tempered, implacable people that our novelists would have us believe, they appear to me to be always placid, forgiving, and anxious to help a stranger on his way.

It was at Barcelona, and not in the South, that I decided to send some picture postcards to my relatives. I bought a packet and looked out for a likely café in which to address them and write those cheerful commonplaces about the cleanliness of the hotel and the magnificence of the cathedral and the brilliance of the weather which are so pleasant to send and so irritating to receive.

On the corner of the Square that I was in was such a place. Yellow cane chairs and marble-topped tables stood under a bright, new awning of red and white. But a little chill wind was blowing, and I decided that it was too cold to sit outside. As I entered the place I remarked that it was a very good café indeed. It had every facility for writing postcards, or indeed letters, for tables were ranged along the room with nests of stationery and a good supply of pens and ink. There were a number of nice stags' heads on the wall and some oil-paintings of distinguished customers. I noticed that some who were there in the flesh, and writing their letters, were not drinking anything, and, as it has always seemed to me to be a very mean thing to do to use the amenities of an hotel or café without patronizing it, I ordered a cocktail. Then for an hour I sprawled over the desk writing my stupid postcards. When they were finished I thought I would write to the Bank and one or two other creditors, so I used half a dozen sheets of the headed notepaper. The heading conveyed nothing to me except that the café had a very long name. When I had finished I called for stamps and my bill and offered the waiter his tip. He waived it aside most deferentially, I confess rather to my surprise, but even then I knew what a great gentleman a Spanish waiter can be, so I pocketed my pesetas and thought no more about it. Outside I met an American I knew who was staying at my hotel and spends half the year with the Spanish branch of his firm.

"Hullo," he said, "I didn't know that you were a member there."

"A member, where, if you please?" I replied.

"There," he said, pointing to the building I had just left.

"Member?" I asked. "Does one have to be a member of a café in this country?"

"No," he replied, "but that happens to be one of the most exclusive clubs in Barcelona."

That, I maintain, is one of the things which could only happen in Spain. In the first place no other country in Europe would so deceive the stranger by placing marble-top tables and wicker chairs outside its exclusive clubs. In the second, no other nation would have been so sensitive of causing confusion in the breast of a transparently innocent trespasser as to let him trespass without comment. You cannot persuade me that that impassive waiter who refused my tip did not know that I was an interloper, or that some such suspicion did not pass through the minds of the members in the room in which I sat. They simply preferred not to interfere, arguing perhaps that I should soon discover my blunder and that my embarrassment would be (as it was) sufficient punishment, without calling for the steward to have me forcibly ejected.

Others may keep the illusion of the proud Castilian with his ready poignard. My Spaniard is a leisurely, indolent, good-natured fellow with a ready smile and about as much idea of class distinction as a mediæval saint. "When you're on parade, you're on parade," as the sergeant-majors used to say, "and when you're off, you're off." Never did I discover how deeply this attitude of mind is ingrained in the Spaniard until that brilliant autumn morning when I played pitch and toss on the mountain road which leads from the Alhambra to the summer palace of the Moorish kings—that very lovely place called the Generallife.

Do you perhaps not know how to play that ancient game? The Andalusian rules differ slightly from those of Shoreditch. They are more simple. Someone throws a penny a good distance away, and then the rest of the competitors try to throw pennies on to it. When the

whole stock of coppers is exhausted, he who has got nearest to the original penny sweeps the pool.

Without the walls of the Alhambra there are two great and fashionable hotels—and it was outside one of these that I came suddenly upon a little crowd of strangely assorted people playing the noble game. There was the manager, and the booking clerk both in black morning dress, two stout German guests of the hotel in white alpaca suits, an American in a cummerbund, a swarthy young waiter in his shirt sleeves, a young man in a blue blouse who ought to have been doing something with a pickaxe, and other nondescript people who were either staying in or employed by the hotel.

I stopped and watched and was fascinated, fascinated chiefly by the high good humour of them all, their shouts of glee and laughter when someone made a particularly good throw, and their amusement when a highly powered car dashing down the hill to Granada scattered them in all directions. It was impossible not to ask to be allowed to join in. Why not? The more the merrier.

If anybody had told me that I have a natural gift for pitching pennies I should not have believed them, but I have. I was invincible; I won every time, and the more I won, the more they laughed and cheered—only pausing to run into the hotel and get fresh supplies of coppers.

"The signor wins—the signor wins again!" But the signor was not always to win. Slowly there crept up the hill a very ancient waggon drawn by two old and very grey horses led by an old and very grey peasant. He stopped his team beside us—and grimly watched our play. When the pool was sufficiently large he stepped into his place and threw his coin. It landed neatly on the top of the original penny. The applause would have satisfied a prima donna. Bravo Mariano! they shouted, but old Mariano did not bow. He stood and waited for the pool to fill again. Two more throws and he was in possession of our entire bank—and then by common consent the game broke up—and the old man, having pocketed some eight pesetas worth of coppers, led his waggon up the hill.

But it was the dispersal of that happy, excited crowd that interested me most. It seemed as if some inaudible bugle had blown them back in an instant to the serious purposes of life. The hotel manager, who had been one of the noisiest of the crew, had stiffened into impersonality and was washing his hands before two Spanish ladies who wanted some change of accommodation. The booking clerk was behind his desk gravely adding up his figures. The hotel guests were sitting under the verandah as aloof from each other as if they had never met, and the merry little waiter had quickly donned his black coat and his apron and was serving vermouth and soda, with an immovable face, and a head that seemed permanently bowed in admiration of those who could afford to drink it.

That is my Spain, or the part of it I like best—the Spain which in the leisure hours knows only an equality of its children and would have them all be happy together.

As for fishing for goldfish in the gardens of the Alcazar, that, perhaps, is a slight exaggeration. It is a recollection of a hot autumn afternoon when my companion and I sat on the edge of a fountain in that delicious place and with our shirt sleeves rolled up tried to catch with our hands the bright little beggars darting to and fro in the water. And a gardener, older even than his battered sombrero, came and stood over us and laughed at our folly, and seemed to say, You may be in a Moorish palace, now the property of a Bourbon monarchy, but you wouldn't be allowed to do that at Versailles or Hampton Court. I am afraid that he was right. That, again, was one of the things one could only do in Spain.

J. B. STERNDALÉ BENNETT.

MORE LIGHT!

ELECTRIC hares, slotted wings, microphones, mechanical refrigerators, almost all recent applications of science seem to me the fruit of a curious and exhilarating age. But the other day at Alton in Hampshire I saw miracles in the making that might reconcile to the present many of those who most detest it—ugliness being turned into beauty, drones into workers, misery into happiness—miracles that command the applause alike of the æsthete, the economist, and the philosopher.

Surgical tuberculosis is one of the vilest and most serious diseases to which man is liable. It attacks nearly always the young, and chiefly the poverty stricken. In most cases it seems caused by milk from tubercular cows, and all the milk in this country, except from a few specially supervised herds, is liable, when unboiled, to be tubercular. The Ministry of Agriculture, for reasons of expense, has not yet been able to require the slaughter of these animals which each year infect hundreds of children. The malady spreads slowly, distorting and destroying the bones, covering the skin with repulsive pustules and eating the life of the young as surely as cancer destroys that of the old. Hip disease is the commonest form of it, lupus the most horrible.

The disease has been discovered to be curable. In southern countries, it is almost unknown. The principal and irresistible remedy is light. And to the names of the other pioneers of this discovery, Finsen, Bernhard, and Rollier, must be added that of Sir Henry Gauvain, whose genius controls the Lord Mayor Treloar Cripples' Hospital and College. The processes by which light-rays effect the cure seem still somewhat mysterious. The first stage is the exposure of the small areas of the body to the sun. This causes mild inflammation, which the body conquers by an increase in a disinfectant power of the blood; and the forces mustered, as it were, to resist the mildly toxic effects of the light-rays, find their way to the infinitely deadlier poison working in the bones. In time the whole body becomes pigmented, leaving no area which will react in this way to the sun. But this has given the body a great resistance to heat and cold. Aerotherapy begins. The patient spends almost all the day naked in the open air, which keeps the vaso-motor system in a continual activity which has extraordinarily beneficial results. Meanwhile, various forms of artificial light with rays shorter and more penetrating than those of the sun are employed, carbon and tungsten arcs, infra-red and mercury vapour lamps. By these various means the disease is stopped. Then, and then only, surgical treatment is given, and the patient made whole as far as may be by orthopædic and facial surgery. The treatment takes from one to four years, and is successful at Alton in over 98 per cent. of cases.

At the Lord Mayor Treloar Cripples' Hospital and College there are beds for 355 children and for fifty boys, who have been under treatment and are now being trained in skilled handicrafts. Besides the main Institution at Alton, there is a Hospital at Hayling Island where some of the patients are sent for sea-water treatment. Children are admitted from infancy up to twelve years of age. Some of the wards suggest the most ingenious horrors of mediæval torture chambers: children racked and curved and distorted on elaborate devices, lying face downwards sometimes, or with feet higher than their heads, weights and pulleys and cog wheels straining their bones. Yet none of them appears to be in pain: indeed as soon as the right position is found in which to stretch them they feel relief. And the general atmosphere of the hospital is

extraordinarily gay. The children are very high-spirited: their outdoor life and good conditions give to many of them the appearance of bursting health (incidentally the proportion among them of pretty blondes is very high); but there are others whose faces have been appallingly ravaged by the disease: in many the disease has been allowed to progress until their limbs look like sticks, but I saw no cases of amputation. I believe however the delicate operation of removing one of the vertebrae is fairly common.

Surgical tuberculosis, as terrible a disease in its way as leprosy, is contagious, and it is difficult to understand why it has not been made certifiable. Many children are rotting away, and possibly infecting others, because their parents refuse to part with them. Even fanatical believers in personal liberty—and I am myself one of the most fanatical—must deplore this. The parents' liberty to keep their child with them is nothing compared with the child's freedom to get cured. But when surgical tuberculosis is made certifiable, there must be sufficient institutions for its treatment. A hospital like Lord Mayor Treloar's is needed for every district. For it is inadmissible that children should be allowed to decay slowly when a remedy is available. There is not much sun in England, but there is enough for successful phototherapy: even the clouds, I gather, give out ultra-violet radiation. Alton in Hampshire gives as good results as Leysin in Switzerland. Many of us believe that it is the business of the State, on economic as well as humanitarian grounds, to prevent such disgusting and unnecessary wastage of life as is caused by surgical tuberculosis. At present it does not do so. The Treloar Hospital does. It urgently needs new buildings. I do not believe that there is any charitable institution in England which makes a greater appeal to the imagination of all sensitive persons, whether beauty, usefulness, or happiness be the ruling passion of their lives.

RAYMOND MORTIMER.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

THE thirty-fourth season of the Promenade Concerts, and the second under the new B.B.C. regime, was inaugurated on Saturday, August 11th. On the 16th the programme included the first of the season's novelties, namely, a piano concerto by Alexandre Tansman, a young Polish composer whose work has hitherto remained unknown in this country. The statement in the programme, however, that Tansman is "The foremost representative of his native Poland" is hardly borne out by this particular work at least. If it is typical of the composer at his best Szymanovsky must surely be conceded to be in every way a very much more important and interesting figure. The most sympathetic feature of the work lies in the shortness and concision of all four movements, but this is, after all, a somewhat negative virtue common to most composers of the present day, and one that is to a large extent merely the outcome of an unthinking reaction against the long-windedness of much nineteenth-century music. Its greatest fault consists in its stylistic inequality and patchiness; clear-cut, conventional, diatonic passages frequently alternate with a rather mushy and impressionistic manner of writing. A welcome feature of the same concert was the seldom-played Italian Symphony of Mendelssohn, a pleasant work of which the second and fourth movements are particularly enjoyable. Three Dances from de Falla's "Three-cornered Hat" and Strauss's "Don Juan" were other items in a more than usually interesting programme, which, incidentally, also introduced to us Miss Marian Anderson,

a dusky contralto with a delightfully rich and velvety lower register, whom we hope to have the pleasure of hearing again.

* * *

Whatever one's own personal reaction may be to the work of Mr. Arnold Bax, it cannot be disputed that he possesses the faculty of thinking in sounds to a more highly developed degree than almost any other composer of the present day, in this country at least. If his works on a large scale frequently give one the impression of diffuseness and prolixity it is not because they are too long, as they are often unthinkingly said to be, but merely because he has so much to say and such facility in the saying of it. His Symphony in E flat, however, played on the 21st, is not on the whole such a satisfying specimen of his work as his Variations for piano and orchestra, which probably represents his highest achievement up to the present time, largely because the essentially lyrical and reflective nature of his ideas lends itself more freely to variation and decorative elaboration than to symphonic treatment and development. In spite of this the Symphony undoubtedly contains some of the best music the composer has yet given us, and deserves a permanent place in the modern orchestral repertoire.

* * *

The Italian puppets are with us once more at the New Scala. They have made so many friends on former visits, that there is no necessity to do more than re-announce their arrival. They are charming nearly all the time and certainly offer one of the best entertainments at present to be seen in London. It is only after leaving the theatre that the philosophic visitor will regret that, good as they are, they are not even better. They sometimes fall into a purely intellectual error, that of undertaking things for which they are not entirely suited, and err by excess of realism. If a puppet is exactly like what it imitates, it is no more amusing than the original. The art of the puppet is the art of exaggeration. It must seize on what is essential in any movement and by slightly overstressing it, render it typical. Naturally this applies chiefly to the puppet as a comic artist, and in their present programme, old friends like the Geisha and the Circus and a very good ballet, "Exelsior," the puppets do not attempt tragedy. There is a quartette of singers with pianoforte accompaniment in which the pianist is the essence of everything a puppet satire should be. On other occasions the art was forgotten in the virtuosity. I think these puppets are capable of too many life-like movements. Still, theirs is a charming entertainment.

* * *

"The Devil's Host" (at the Comedy Theatre) is a better entertainment than most. There is real comedy in the persons collected for the devil's examination, and some real wit in dialogue. But the weakness of the play lies in the fact that the Devil is always on the side of light. "The Prince of Darkness is a Christian," and when standing up for truth he becomes almost as long-winded as Milton's Eternal Father. Yet it should be the province of Belial to "make the worse appear the better cause," and this is never attempted at the Comedy Theatre. You leave supping with this particular Mephistopheles a sadder and a wiser man. What is more, he really is a good man, truthful, unsentimental, occasionally platitudinous. What can be left for the powers of light to do? Mr. Franklin Dyall was magnificently got up as the Devil, and looked quite as wicked as he was, as a matter of fact, blameless. With God and the Devil on the same side, we really ought to be able to avoid the next war. All the company play up well; the dialogue is witty; the situations often theatrical in the good sense; the comments on life adult and respectable. It is only surprising to hear them uttered by the Devil.

Things to see and hear in the coming week :—

Saturday, September 1st.—

"The Runaways," at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre.

Children's Theatre, Endell Street, reopens.

Mr. S. K. Ratcliffe at the Wireless, 9.15.

Haslemere Festival, Dances and Festive Music, 8.

Sunday, September 2nd.—

Society of British Art, at the Scala Theatre, in "The Age to Marry," and "To Meet Mr. Shaw," by Austin Fryers.

Monday, September 3rd.—

The Palladium reopens with a Variety programme.

Film: "Mumsie," at the Stoll Picture Theatre.

Film: "The Spy," at the Marble Arch Pavilion.

Wednesday, September 5th.—

"Excelsior," an English version of "L'Ecole des Cocottes," at the Playhouse.

Thursday, September 6th.—

"Song of the Sea," Musical Comedy, at His Majesty's.

Friday, September 7th.—

Dr. L. F. Rushbrook Williams on the Wireless, "The Princes of India," 9.15.

OMICRON.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

THE ATHENÆUM, SEPTEMBER 3RD, 1828.

LITERARY PROMISES

By far the most interesting announcement which we have received is that of a Life of Don Miguel Cervantes Saavedra, by Mr. Lockhart. What writer in Europe is there who may not envy Mr. Lockhart the choice of such a subject, and who is there that will not hope to see it treated in a manner which will vindicate his right to choose it? There are many reasons which induce us to think that an Englishman—and we hope Mr. Lockhart will allow us to call him one—is better fitted than the inhabitant of any other country to be the biographer of this wonderful man. That no Spaniard could do it justice, we feel convinced. In the height of their glory—in the abyss of their degradation—Spaniards have always remained the most national of the nations. Their feelings within the circle of their national existence are intense; but to reach beyond it is an effort of mind which has been reserved only for the most exalted geniuses among them. . . . To Cervantes alone (and possibly Calderon), seems to have been reserved the power of divesting himself of national peculiarities, and of living and writing for mankind.

London Amusements.

MATINEES FOR THE WEEK.

DRURY LANE. Wed. & Sat., 2.30.

SHOW BOAT

NEW SCALA. Wed. & Thurs., 2.30.

ITALIAN MARIONETTES.

LONDON PAVILION. Tues. & Thurs., 2.30.

THIS YEAR OF GRACE

ROYALTY. Thurs. & Sat., 2.30.

BIRD IN HAND.

THEATRES.

ALDWYCH. (Gerrard 2304.)

NIGHTLY, at 8.15.

Matinees, Wednesdays and Fridays, 2.30.

"PLUNDER." A New Farce by Ben Travers.

TOM WALLIS, Mary Brough, and RALPH LYNN.

DRURY LANE. (Ger. 2567.) 8.15 precisely. Wed., Sat., 2.30 precisely.

"SHOW BOAT." A New Musical Play.

DUKE OF YORK'S. Evgs., 8.30. Mats., Mon., Thurs., 2.30. (Smoking.)

"MANY HAPPY RETURNS."

MIMI CRAWFORD. MORRIS HARVEY.

HERB. WILLIAMS, "The Funniest Man in the World."

HIPPODROME, London. Evenings, at 8.15.

Gerrard 0650.

MATINEES, WEDS., THURS. & SATS., at 2.30.

"THAT'S A GOOD GIRL."

A MUSICAL COMEDY.

KINGSWAY. (Holb. 4032.) Nightly, 8.15. Mats., Wed., Thurs. & Sat., 2.30.

JEAN CADELL in

LAST WEEKS. "MARICOLD." (Now in its 2nd year.) LAST WEEKS.

LYRIC THEATRE, Hammersmith.

EVENINGS, at 8.20.

"SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER."

Produced by NIGEL PLAYFAIR.

MATINEES, WED. & SAT., at 2.30.

Riverside 3012.

NEW SCALA

ITALIAN MARIONETTES.

SEVEN WEEKS SEASON.

Evenings 8.15. Mats., Wednesday & Thursday, 2.30.

All seats bookable.

Popular Prices.

(Mus. 6010.)

THEATRES.

ROYALTY (Ger. 2690.) EVGS., 8.30. MATS., THURS., & SAT., 2.30.

BARRY JACKSON presents

"BIRD IN HAND."

A Comedy by JOHN DRINKWATER.

ST. MARTIN'S. (Gerr. 1243 & 3416.)

HUGH WAKEFIELD.

"KNIGHT ERRANT." By Eric Forbes Boyd.

Evenings, at 8.40. Matinees, Tuesday and Friday, at 2.30.

SAVOY.

Evenings, 8.30. Matinees, Wednesday & Thursday, 2.30.

"YOUNG WOODLEY."

FRANK LAWTON.

KATHLEEN O'REGAN.

WYNDHAM'S (Reg. 3028.)

EVENINGS (except Mondays), 8.30.

Matinees, Wed., Fri., Sat., 2.30. LEON M. LION presents

JOHN GALSWORTHY'S "LOYALTIES."

LEON M. LION, ERIC MATURIN, LAWRENCE HANRAY, MOLLY KERR.

CONCERTS.

QUEEN'S HALL.

Sole Lessees—Chappell & Co., Ltd.

BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION.

PROMENADE B.B.C. CONCERTS.

NIGHTLY, at 8.

SIR HENRY J. WOOD

AND HIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA.

2s. to 7s. 6d., at Agents, and Chappell's, Queen's Hall.

CINEMAS.

STOLL PICTURE THEATRE, Kingsway.

(Holborn 3703.)

DAILY, 2 to 10.45. (SUNDAYS, New Programme, 6 to 10.30.)

September 3rd, 4th & 5th. PAULINE FREDERICK and Nelson Keys in "MUMSIE"; CLARA BOW in "GET YOUR MAN," etc.

September 6th, 7th & 8th. DOLORES COSTELLO in "OLD SAN FRANCISCO"; THEODORE VON ELTZ in "THE GREAT BULLION ROBBERY."

THE WORLD OF BOOKS

THE ANTI-BABELISTS

THE world in general is inclined to consider that those who ask us to learn Volapük, Esperanto, Idiom Neutral, Latino sine Flexione, Ido, or Occidental, all belong to the great regiment of cranks. I am ashamed to confess that I feel myself sharing the prejudice to some extent. I have never realized so clearly that it is a prejudice until I read "An International Language," by Otto Jespersen (Allen & Unwin, 4s. 6d.). Professor Jespersen is certainly not a crank; he is the learned grammarian who holds a professorship in the University of Copenhagen, and two of his books which I know in English translations, "The Philosophy of Grammar" and "A Modern English Grammar," are extraordinarily good. So is this new book of his on an international language. He has no difficulty in showing the world's need for an international language. Until the nineteenth century, human society was static and sedentary, more parochial even than national. The vast majority of men probably never saw a foreigner unless they were trying to kill one or to avoid being killed by one. This stage of society still exists in some Spanish mountain villages: if you see a stranger, you naturally throw stones at him, and there is an end of it. The world is bounded, north, east, south, and west, by the next parish. In such circumstances you never require to speak any language but your own patois or dialect. But during the last hundred years, large tracts of human society, to the indignation of patriots, have become internationalized. The parish has merged in the county and the county in the nation, and nations are merging in continents, if not in the world. Even before the war, hundreds of thousands of Englishmen must have tried to talk to a Frenchman. This narrowing of the world and interlocking of human society have proceeded at a great pace. The civilized man who the other day could get along with French and perhaps a mouthful of German, now finds that this is not nearly enough. To-day he wishes to discuss democracy with a Spaniard, to-morrow freedom with an Italian, and the day after civilization with a Russian, to say nothing of Serbs, Croats, Czechs, and Poles whom he may meet by the way. A network of international government, administration, and organization now covers the world, and, like most necessary and inevitable things, is ignored by most of us. Conferences, congresses, associations, all international, are continually meeting in order to arrange the affairs of the world in a cosmopolitan manner which, to readers of the *MORNING POST*, must seem grossly unpatriotic, although, if the arrangements were not made, those readers would feel that life had relapsed into barbarism. At Geneva is the embryo of a super-State, and in a week or two it will assemble the representatives of some fifty different Governments to its international Parliament. Everyone with experience of this side of international life knows to what an extent the work of the League and other associations—of science and learning and, indeed, of all civilization—is hampered by the fact that, almost certainly, if five men of five different nationalities seat themselves round a table, there will be no language which all of them speak and understand.

There can, then, be no doubt with regard to the need for an international language, or an interlanguage, as Professor Jespersen calls it. The main difficulties are to get

agreement on what it should be, an existing language or an artificial language; which of the existing or artificial languages, as the case may be, shall be selected; and how, once selected, its universal adoption may be secured. Professor Jespersen and his fellow workers argue that a deliberate choice of an existing language is impossible owing to international jealousies, and that therefore an artificial language is necessary. Their arguments do not seem to me to be quite conclusive. After all, the number of foreigners who have learnt to speak and read English or French must be infinitely greater than the total number of people who have taken the trouble to learn one of the constructed languages. Either of these languages is much nearer "universality" than Esperanto and Ido. The fact that there are some forty million people in France already talking French, not to speak of French literature, is an inducement to me and thousands of people who are not Frenchmen to learn French. I naturally hesitate to learn Novial, because at the moment I know that Professor Jespersen is the only man who talks it, and that, if I had the good fortune to meet him, I should find that, though a Dane, he speaks English as well as I do. The same applies, though, of course, to a less extent, to Esperanto or Ido, for how do I know that I shall ever meet someone who knows those languages? While I am learning an artificial language on the chance that some day in some part of the world I may meet a solitary non-English-speaking Czech who has also learnt it, I might be learning, say, Spanish in the certain knowledge that I have only to go to Spain to find millions of people who will talk to me in Spanish. It seems to me therefore that an artificial language can never become even moderately useful, unless there is an international agreement, not only to adopt it, but to teach it compulsorily.

Professor Jespersen thinks that there is a greater chance of getting agreement for the adoption of a particular artificial language than for that of an existing language. The very interesting history of the interlanguage movement, which he gives in this little book, hardly warrants his optimism. Since J. M. Schleyer invented Volapük in 1880, schisms and disagreements among the pioneers have led to the propagation of about five other new languages, and Professor Jespersen himself now comes forward with yet another, Novial. One of the most interesting parts of his book is that in which he constructs this language on scientific principles before our very eyes and ears. It is obviously an admirable language for its purpose, extremely simple and easy to learn, at any rate for an Englishman. But I do not feel at all sure that it would be accepted by the Esperantists or the Idists, and unless the pioneers and believers can agree universally, what chance will there be of getting universal agreement from the unbelievers? The difficulty is, indeed, not to get a good international language constructed—a learned and ingenious man, like Professor Jespersen, may be trusted to do that—but to get it universally adopted and learnt. When one studies the subject, one is sometimes inclined to think that the only solution is that of the Professor whom Gulliver met in the Laputa Academy with his "scheme for entirely abolishing all words whatsoever."

LEONARD WOOLF.

REVIEWS

ANATOLE FRANCE

The Unrisen Dawn. Speeches and Addresses by ANATOLE FRANCE. Translated, with an Introduction, by J. LEWIS MAY. (Lane. 7s. 6d.)

Anatole France Abroad. By JEAN JACQUES BROUSSON. Translated by JOHN POLLOCK. (Thornton Butterworth. 10s. 6d.)

IF the almost simultaneous publication of these two translations was a matter of chance, it was as genially roguish an accident as ever led a saint to baptize penguins. For the contact of the two contrasting books gives rise to sparks that dazzle and intrigue. One is set wondering whether Anatole France was the most thoroughgoing and downright of sceptics, cynical to the point of glibly making speeches tongue in cheek; or whether, on the contrary, there was not far more of humanitarian fervour in his philosophy than either his books or his private conversation admitted. Here, on the one hand, we have France on the public platform, reading out his carefully prepared orations, appearing always as the champion of a Cause: upholder of Socialism, of education for the masses; sympathizer (in 1905) with the anti-Czarist revolutionaries of Russia; payer of gracious and admiring tributes to individual enrichers of thought, literature, and art. The words may be charged with sarcasm at the enemy's expense, but the figure is always dignified and in essence serious.

M. Brousson, secretary to the great man, will have none of it. Continuing, in this volume, his light record of France's talk and indiscretions, he insists exclusively on the other side of the medal. There is no dignity and very little seriousness in his sketches of the novelist's lecturing tour in South America, to the accompaniment of a new *affaire de cœur* with a touring actress, and a tornado of reproaches from "Madame." This chronicler is entirely lacking in the philosophical detachment of a certain Jacques Tournébroche whom he must have known, and who refrained from publishing his written memoirs of the Abbé Jérôme Coignard. M. Brousson, cast off by Anatole France in Buenos Ayres as mercilessly as Madame was in Paris, takes a motto for his title page from Voltaire—"The living have a right to respect, the dead but to the truth"—and so proceeds.

It is a stimulating motto, in face of these two books. We are, then, to respect the speeches and believe the memoirs? That is where the difficulty lies. France's amours and infidelities may be passed over as irrelevant to the main consideration. His intellectual vagaries, as shown in the private contradictions of his publicly manifested self, have far more interest and significance. In the general change from solemnity to flippancy of tone there is nothing remarkable; the orator who declaimed in private life would be insufferable. France's inconsistencies are, however, in the very substance of his opinions; and the most striking example comes, not from the tortured and unstable realm of politics, but from that of intellect and literary thought, in which the novelist's judgment should bear greater weight. The longest, and, it would seem, most balanced and complete of the collected speeches is that delivered at the unveiling of a statue of Renan. Praise of the bold scientific sanity of Renan's philosophic genius leads up to an address by Pallas Athene, in which Wisdom represents herself as nourished by the thought and knowledge of wise men, and in particular of Renan's own. "Lentement mais toujours," ends the Goddess, "l'humanité réalise les rêves des sages." In spite of its tendency to rhetoric, there is an impassioned beauty in the speech that genuinely impresses.

Must we say, rather, that it takes us in? In M. Brousson's reports, to be coupled with Renan is to France an insult. The biographers of Joan and Jesus are not to be compared. Renan lacks critical sense and insight, is insipid, is (of all things) *inconsistent* and his reasoning false. The "Life of Jesus" is "a mixture of dirty German erudition with seminarist pietism. Sauerkraut and whipped eggs!" Pallas Athene begins to look ridiculous. As for that final motto, M. Brousson, employing it for multitudes of forged autographs, decides to vary it. "Slowly, but inexorably, the future fulfils the dreams of madmen." France, approaching silently, approves: "Far, far more true!"

But it is not so simple as that. M. Brousson, for all his Voltairian quotation, can give us but a truth of eye and ear, in which no subtlety of perception plays a part. We must turn for help to Coignard, who is more fairly treated by his disciple than is France. The Abbé's last recorded words are these: "Il faut, pour servir les hommes, rejeter toute raison, comme un bagage embarrassant, et s'élever sur les ailes de l'enthousiasme. Si l'on raisonne, on ne s'envolera jamais." There speaks France himself—France the complete rationalist, who can doubt and analyze till all credulity is dead. To serve men, on the public platform, he must cast away his hypercritical reasoning, his shade on shade of sceptical sharp irony; and the wings of enthusiasm, unhampered, will in all sincerity spread out. But the very power of that discarded luggage, dragging him back to it, reveals inadequacies in the object of his flight. If Wisdom has become ridiculous, he too is something of a fool, and knows it. For he would be no true ironist who, laughing at humanity, could not include himself.

SYLVIA NORMAN.

THE AUTHOR OF HUDIBRAS

Samuel Butler: Satires and Miscellaneous Poetry and Prose. Edited by RENÉ LAMAR, M.A. Cambridge English Classics. (Cambridge University Press. 15s.)

THIS, the third volume of the Cambridge edition of Butler's works, contains, in spite of its miscellaneous material, not the least interesting section of that writer's verse. "Hudibras" is well known; but all those who are acquainted with that strange work will recognize that Butler succeeded best in the single thought, in the single passage; power of construction in the larger sense was a quality denied him. These miscellaneous fragments, therefore, the loose jottings of a fertile although somewhat unbalanced mind, do not lose much in interest because they are detached; indeed, some seem, because of that very detachment, to shine the more vigorously, unembedded in a mass of material possibly of vastly inferior worth.

Professor Lamar's task has not been an easy one, but it has been carried through with praiseworthy skill and devotion. The late seventeenth century and the early eighteenth century were periods fruitful in wrong ascriptions, so that it is almost impossible nowadays to disentangle the spurious from the true in the writings of men such as Butler and Rochester. Happily, the present editor has been conservative, with the result that this Cambridge volume contains practically nothing which cannot, on a show of evidence, be safely attributed to the author of "Hudibras." The greatest treasure-trove comes from the British Museum manuscript Add. 32625, evidently a kind of commonplace-book in which Butler jotted down, now complete poems, now fragments of prose, now sections of verse clearly intended for insertion in some longer works. Several of these have not hitherto been printed, and we must thank Professor Lamar for granting us the privilege of reading them now.

This volume, even more than "Hudibras" itself, calls to our attention what may be called Butler's affinities. Almost at once, on scanning these "formal satires," such as the famous "Cat and Puss" dialogue, and these mere shreds of couplets, we think of Swift. Butler was by no means so great a man as the Irish dean, but the two have something in common. In verse neither excels in the decasyllabic line (a comparison of Butler's octosyllabic and decasyllabic versions of "The Elephant in the Moon" is instructive); one feels that both required the almost panting, the sometimes frenzied, rhythm of the octosyllabics for the expression of their bitter and teeming ideas.

"Divide the world int' equal Halves
The one's all Fooles, the other Knaves."

voices the feeling of both. Butler on War utters the same thoughts as Swift on War; and Butler, like Swift, in spite of a true pity, remained to the end an aristocrat of the mind:—

"Nothing make's Hell s'intollerable
As the bad Company and Rabble."

If, however, Butler, in writing these fragments, reminds us of his immediate successor, another figure, removed from his times by a full century, also comes before us:—

"Guns do not Hurt, by making of a noyse ;
It is the Silent Bullet that destroy's,"

and:—

"The Devill was more Generous then Adam,
That never Layd the Fault upon his Madam :
But like a Gallant, and Heroique Elfe,
Tooke freely all the Crime upon himself—"

these two passages might easily have come from "The Proverbs" in "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," or have been scribbled down, not in Butler's, but in Blake's, commonplace-book. Butler was no mystic, but readily might he have become so; something of a fire burns in him which might have produced work vastly different from "Hudibras." The hatred of shams and of meaningless forms appears in his writing as in Blake's:—

"Religion is the Interest of Churches
That sel in other worlds, in this to Purchase,"

and:—

"A Convert's but a Fly that turns about,
After his Head's puld off, to finde it out."

might be taken as characteristic utterances of either. And no more than Blake did Butler love law: "Rules," he thought,

"Were made for Novices, and Fooles."

It may seem strange to make this comparison between the satirist of the age of Charles II. and the mystic poet of the romantic period, but perhaps half the charm of Butler's writings comes from our appreciation of latent powers and strength within him. The man's work, when compared with that of others, is coarse; rarely does he fashion a line as polished as,

"Make Courts wear black, and Tradesmen mourn:—"

but there is something behind the outer form which forces us to class him with writers who, like Swift and Blake, on positive achievement soar far beyond him.

ALLARDYCE NICOLL.

THE TRIUMPHANT CAPTIVE

The Enormous Room. By E. E. CUMMINGS. With an Introduction by ROBERT GRAVES. (Cape. 7s. 6d.)

THE old and the new worlds took their Great War differently; the French, German, and British soldier on active service preserved a kind of epigrammatic aloofness; the American flung himself sociably into the bonfire. The ancients seemed to know that the maddest experience they had ever had on the barbed wire was nothing to what they might expect presently; the moderns, apprehensive lest some degree of the outrage were to be withheld from them, drank their vin ordinaire with all the thrill of a glass handed by Lucrece Borgia. This contrast of reticence and dithyramb appears duly in the literatures of these types—these periods. Previously, we had Barbusse on one side, with his tremendous ironic explosions but with a strong conception of the real front line; on the other side, Dos Passos, with his fiery gasconades of meandering musketeers. Now—we need not call Montague and Mottram to our theory—here is Mr. Cummings's extraordinary prison-camp sensation, and when one sees the experience involved in terms of general war experience, one stands bewildered at the new world's imaginative force. Compare "The Enormous Room" with Mr. Durnford's "Tunnellers of Holzminden,"—it is a comparison between two genuine achievements,—and see the furious intensity of the one in relation to a tolerably unexciting episode (as episodes went in the war), the prosaic stubbornness of the other over a set of the wildest chances.

Perhaps one who was brought up on the old-fashioned Western Front is so immersed in the habit of reticence as to be a bad judge of war literature. One's critical principles have to fight hard for their rights. One's interpretation of the word "war" is narrowed. It has grown to mean the business of mutual bombardment, gas, raids, offensives; of latrines in shell-holes, with slimy eyes and littered limbs in the way; of the dark silence bursting into cataracts of flame

and clangour; of fifty spectral wretches huddling out where five hundred men marched in. By comparison, the far-off imbecilities of administrators, or the bawdy extravagances of adventure in unshattered streets, might not seem "anything to shout about." But, after all, this must be prejudice; we are growing old and tedious; here is Mr. Cummings triumphantly demonstrating that the barrage was not restricted to the pillbox zone. No lack of ammunition appears in his fantastic sector.

He was serving as an ambulance driver on the French front when, owing to his having a friend who had written letters, the Noyon authorities arrested him. The details of all this, including the moustaches, rosettes, and mispronunciations of his captors, he had the freshness to seize with a swift detachment; afterwards he was sent to a foul, clumsy, degrading prison, where men and women under suspicion of espionage were held. This compulsory plunge into the muck did not defeat him; he remained brilliantly observant, and the novelty of his fate offered enough to observe. If incident, apart from the ugly round of prison existence, was rare, the place brought him into its own peculiar intimacy with characters and their modes of self-expression, powerful enough to keep any intelligence busy. And to such a man as Mr. Cummings, there was—as his book reflects—a persistent beam of heavenly light on those inglorious faces; there were Delectable Mountains in that catacomb; the filthy little Pole hunting round the Enormous Room for chewed cigarette ends, by reason of his gift of playing on any musical instrument, appeared certain of a welcome in the fields of heaven.

In case anyone is anxious to be prepared for the next war, let me lay down the grand principles of success. One should be able, like Mr. Cummings, to sketch, or else to play the piano or some other instrument, or (if one is ambitious) be a good haircutter. And, since one might always fall into a French prison, one should have read Mr. Cummings and seen how to make the best of it.

EDMUND BLUNDEN.



The Postal Account

It is often supposed that to live a long way from the nearest branch of a bank, or to be constantly unable to go to the bank in person, is a handicap to the enjoyment of the full advantages which, it is admitted, a banking account offers. Perhaps it is assumed that to conduct an account by post involves 'more letter-writing', or is costly, or is not welcomed by the Bank. It is the aim of the Westminster Bank to dispel such misconceptions by a leaflet entitled *The Postal Account*, which explains the convenience of the method, and offers some clear suggestions.

*A copy will be gladly sent
on application to
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MRS. THRALE AND CONWAY

The True Story of the So-called Love Letters of Mrs. Piozzi. By PERCIVAL MERRITT. Limited to 350 copies. (Oxford University Press. 14s.)

MRS. THRALE did not fare well at the hands of the Victorians, whom she almost lived to know. Even her supposed supporters found it necessary to pontificate as follows: "We doubt, however, whether Mrs. Piozzi was ever in love—she had not heart enough—she was a weak, vain, foolish woman who loved excitement," a fine Victorian paraphrase for saying that she was witty, cultivated, and charming: "a weak, foolish, fickle creature," to quote another passage. At the age of eighty she embarked with "more eagerness than good taste," into a very warm-hearted friendship with a good-looking, none too successful actor, "a woebegone hero of the sock and buskin." How the Victorians hated failure! And how foolish Mrs. Thrale was! It was even worse than "the fiddler from Brescia."

Hence a good many people must have been highly pleased when in January, 1843, a publisher, John Russell Smith, announced the publication of *Seven Love-letters from Mrs. Piozzi to Conway* at the democratic price of 2s., in which, by prudent omissions, a judicious alteration of commas, use of capital letters, and prefatorial innuendo poor Mrs. Thrale was pictured as being in a state of senile desire for a tenth-rate *gigolo*.

These letters were garbled versions of the correspondence between Mrs. Thrale and Conway, running to upwards of a hundred letters, which were in the possession of a Mrs. Ellet, an American lady, with a facile if not a distinguished pen. Her attention was not for some years directed to the publication, and then she wrote protesting to the *ATHENÆUM*, and handing over the original correspondence to the editors, who utilized them for copious extracts on August 9th, 1862. The republication of this article constitutes the greater part of Mr. Percival Merritt's interesting pamphlet.

Unfortunately Mrs. Ellet never herself proceeded to the publication of the complete correspondence, which seems now to have completely vanished.

Mrs. Thrale emerges from the delightful extracts Mr. Merritt quotes as a loyal and enthusiastic, perhaps somewhat indiscreet, friend of a singularly unfortunate young man, whose talents she may well have over-estimated. He appears to have been the bastard of a noble house, who became an actor more on account of his appearance than his talents. He acted for some years at Bath, without much success, was jilted by a Miss Stratton, with whom he was desperately in love, tried for a time to act in America, decided on abandoning the stage, thought of reading for the Church, and finally committed suicide some years after the death of Mrs. Thrale. He appears to have been of an affectionate and grateful disposition. Mrs. Thrale, unhappy in her relatives' coldness, adopted him as a spiritual son, lavished on him all the affection of her enthusiastic temperament, and tried hard to push him in Bath, an attempt in which she was not permanently successful.

Her letters are charming, full of wit, learning, and memories. We cannot do better than close with an extract characteristic of the twaddle which the weak, foolish, fickle woman of eighty wrote to the woebegone hero of the sock and buskin. She is discussing a tragedy about Conradin, in which Conway was taking the leading part:—

"He (Conradin) was a youth of quite consummate beauty: which was the reason our King William III. used to laugh when German friends and flatterers compared them: because otherwise the parallel ran happily enough: the same ardour in battle, the same hostility to popes, and all at so unripe an age, too! But as Dr. Johnson said to Mr. Thrale, 'Oh, sir, stop my mistress! If once she begins naming her favourite heroes round, we are undone! I hate historic talk, and when Charles Fox said something to me once about Cataline's conspiracy, I withdrew my attention and thought about Tom Thumb.' Poor dear Doctor Collier loved it no better. 'My sweet child,' he used to say, 'leave the historians to moulder on the shelf; I have no hooks in my brain to hang their stories on.' And yet their adoring pupil distracts her last found friend with it in the year 1819—and all out of her own head, as the children say; for ne'er a book have I. Send me the tragedy if 'tis good for

anything and you can do it without inconvenience. Once again, I wonder much who wrote it! Who acted it last night you have told me, and it was very kindly done; and I am now more easy about your health and more careful of my own—that I may enjoy the comfort of being considered dear Mr. Conway's admiring and faithful friend,"

"H. L. P."

It would be interesting to know how many of Mrs. Thrale's irreproachable critics could have composed half such a good letter at half her age.

Mr. Merritt has written a very interesting pamphlet. Perhaps one day he will alight on the complete correspondence.

FRANCIS BIRRELL.

DOCTOR DOLITTLE'S GARDEN

Doctor Dolittle's Garden. By HUGH LOFTING. (Cape. 7s. 6d.)

MR. HUGH LOFTING is a tireless romancer of the old tradition, in generosity a sort of Lady Murasaki for the young. We ask for more and he gives more; this is the seventh volume of Dr. Dolittle, and with its predecessors it should solve many Christmas and birthday present problems. The first part of the book is about the home for Crossbred Dogs, and especially about one Quetch who followed vagabondage until he met Dr. Dolittle. Like many other heroes in picaresque tales, Quetch was born of "poor but honest parents." A conversation which he overheard between his father and mother opened his eyes early to the variety of unpleasant fates that may await a litter of hungry young mongrels, and he decided he must set out to carve a career for himself. We see him doing it, with all his little store of bones tied up in a red handkerchief, and the milestone in the picture says "Ten miles to Forfar." Hunger sometimes drove Quetch to be a little unscrupulous, but he remains a nice dog in spite of it; he was born sensible, and his experiences taught him philosophy rather than cunning. After this comes a great deal about insects, and Dr. Dolittle's remarkably successful efforts to communicate with them—perhaps in part suggested by Bose's experiments upon flowers? Tangerine, the wasp, is a surprisingly likeable individual, though not as fascinating as the little creatures who "pack all the joys and experiences of life into twenty-four hours." The doctor listens to the feverish messages of one "already middle-aged, because he had been born early that morning and it was now two o'clock in the afternoon. He seemed very frail. . . . 'Look here, Stubbins,' said the Doctor, 'we are being entirely heartless. We can't let this poor fellow spend more than half an hour talking to us. Why, half an hour out of his life is a forty-eighth part of the whole. That would be nearly eighteen months for us. Imagine anyone talking to you for a year and a half without stopping. . . .'" One night a giant moth arrives in Dr. Dolittle's garden in a state of exhaustion. He is massaged with liniments, warmed with hundreds of hot bottles, and fed with section after section of honey, and on his furry back the Doctor, Stubbins, Chee-chee, and Polynesia all make the perilous journey to the moon. The book ends at their arrival. There must be many good stories still to come of Dr. Dolittle in the moon, for Stubbins at least returned safely to earth, or how could he have managed to give Mr. Jonathan Cape the story of the journey there?

The drawings by the author, with their deceptively amateur air, really achieve illustration. They seize the critical moments in the story and are both explicit and funny about them; and, perhaps even more important, the simple lines and the rough paper make them most amenable to colouring, supposing one had a paint-box and talent in that direction.

Comparison with "Alice in Wonderland" and "Struwelpeter" and the works of Beatrix Potter would be unfair, and the reader who expects anything as literary, imaginative, or trenchantly humorous as those classics will be disappointed. But here we have fantasy which will satisfy the thirst of the modern scientific child for information in a thoroughly amusing way. A good deal of nonsense and some rather charming moralizing gets mixed up with Wells and Bose and the Natural History Books, but that does no harm. Dr. Dolittle has the right attitude of mind.

CAN CANCER BE PREVENTED?

Cancer: The Surgeon, and the Researcher. By J. ELLIS BARKER.
With an introduction by SIR W. ARBUTHNOT LANE. (Murray.
7s. 6d.)

"FRANKNESS is the privilege of friendship, and I have indicated my feeling towards the medical profession by dedicating to it this work." There, it may be said, Mr. Barker's friendship ends. The rest of his book is devoted to an exposition of the thesis that "the immediate cause of the terrible increase of cancer is obvious. It is to be found mainly in the futile and misguided activity of the cancer researchers, surgeons, and other cancer experts, who are cruelly misleading the nation." "Their excuse is that they have a living to earn and a family to keep, and that they are unacquainted with any other way of earning their daily bread." In this strain, Mr. Barker continues for some four hundred and fifty pages. Then, remembering his dedication, he reiterates on his last page his declaration of friendship. "Many surgeons and researchers are my personal friends," he says, "I do not accuse them of criminal ill-will, or criminal ill-usage of funds, or criminal conspiracy, but I charge them with what is infinitely worse. I charge them with misleading the people; with suppressing the truth regarding cancer, and with spreading thereby the disease among millions of people." He ends his volume with the proud boast that its preparation and publication have not been financed by any of the cancer-research organizations. "I should have felt ashamed and humiliated to accept tainted money from any of those bodies which I have felt compelled to hold up to public obloquy and execration."

Seeing that cancer researchers "do not endeavour to discover the truth, but bend all their efforts upon stifling it," where are we to look for guidance? Remembering the sponsorship of this book, need we hesitate? In his introductory chapter, Sir W. Arbuthnot Lane tells us that "cancer is a commonplace disease due to commonplace causes that can easily be avoided. We need only reform our lives in accordance with the dictates of Nature and the recommendations laid down by the experts of the New Health Society." Nor is the author himself afflicted with hampering modesty. "Cancer mortality," he writes, "could vastly and rapidly be reduced if Governments would advocate simple, common-sense reforms in accordance with the teachings of this book." But, beyond a general denunciation of "civilization," it is difficult to extract from our author any definition of these desirable reforms, or of the nature or cause of cancer. "Every reader," he says, "can easily map out a programme which should secure him against the disease"; and his sponsor tritely observes that "prevention is an infinitely more important means of dealing with this scourge than operation can ever be." Arising out of this truism, Mr. Barker advances a syllogism more characteristic than convincing: "Every disease has a cause. Removal of the cause will obviously eliminate the disease itself. Every disease is therefore preventable." Which seems to clash with a foolish saying of Sydenham's, approvingly quoted by the writer at the head of one of his chapters: "Acute diseases are due to the act of God; chronic diseases are due to our own fault."

The statistical position which cancer occupies among the causes of death makes it easy for any publicist or fanatic to stampede uninformed people into panic. It is therefore of consequence that care be taken by writers and responsible publishers to avoid giving expression and publicity to wild statements which can convince only those who are unacquainted with the facts, and therefore in no position to check such statements. Many things said in this book are not in accordance with fact. The truths it contains are familiar to every student of the subject. Their exposition does not call for polemics.

Of one thing we may be sure. Any serious advance in our knowledge of cancer will be the result of scientific observation and scientific experiment. Only a person altogether ignorant of medical history, unfamiliar with the records of the unravelling of the mysteries of malaria, of yellow fever, of germ-diseases generally, could write: "The

insufficiency of biology and bacteriology as guides in the study of disease-causation is obvious to all students of these so-called sciences"; or state that "chemistry, likewise, is not a science, but merely a backward handicraft." No wonder Mr. Barker hankers after "the old-fashioned physician who knew how to cure"—his brain unmuddled by such new-fangled "laboratory discoveries" as vitamins, anti-diphtheria serum, insulin, thyroid extract, and surgical cleanliness.

It is regrettable that a book of this sort should fall into the hands of many who, from inexperience, are unable to detect the baselessness of its many dogmas, or the injustice and egotism of its personal charges.

HARRY ROBERTS.

THE WORLD TO PLAY WITH

The World to Play With. By ASHLEY DUKES. (Oxford University Press. 6s.)

MR. ASHLEY DUKES has chosen so charming a title for his collection of essays on the theatre that criticism is almost disarmed at the outset. Unfortunately the promise of originality and spontaneity is never quite realized, and it is slightly disappointing to find that the author introduces serious questions, such as the value of verse as a dramatic form, the relation of playwright to producer in the modern theatre, only to guide subsequent discussion into the shallows of drawing-room urbanities, sacrificing subtlety of analysis to versatility of fancy, and conversing in a pleasant monotone which is entertaining without being exhilarating, and persuasive without being convincing.

The essays are arranged under two sub-headings, "The Theatre" and "The Play," but there is no rigidity of classification, and all the world being admittedly a stage, Mr. Dukes can pass lightly and legitimately from Salzburg to the movies, from the *bisseur* of the *claque* to the modern playgoer. The underlying motif of these variations is the rehabilitation of the "theatre theatrical" through the offices of its high priest the producer. In the prologue, William Shakespeare begs most opportunely to be released from "the frosty arms of immortality," and this rash renunciation of glory is the signal for a vigorous onslaught on the status of the playwright. Dramatic art is proved to be an anachronism, a stubborn piece of antiquity, a mere survival of the prehistoric age when Shaw and Pinero used the theatre as a vehicle of propaganda, and the playwright, summarily dismounted from his pedestal, is bidden contribute his humble offering, the play, to the evolution of a new and composite art—the art of the theatre.

The aristocracy of individual genius is lightly dismissed to make way for an Utopian democracy in which the play represents the assembled piece-work of producer, stage-carpenter, playwright, &c., and Shakespeare is presented not merely in modern dress—which as the author remarks, is no innovation—but in the modern speech of contemporary New York!

The theory is, of course, symptomatic of the general revulsion against the stark naturalism of the old drama of ideas which upheld dogmatic at the expense of artistic ideals—a reaction from which Mr. Dukes suffers so acutely that he turns for relief to undiluted theatricalism, dwelling lingeringly on the sensationalism of Monte Carlo and the suicidal glamour of Niagara Falls, and advocating self-conscious and unabashed gesture as an antidote to the oppressive restraint of the photographic theatre.

No doubt the antidote is necessary, and already at Salzburg, the paradise of producers, and, on a smaller scale, at the Festival Theatre, Cambridge, it is being put to the test with interesting and often successful results. But there is a touch of the fanatic in every good reformer, and perhaps the transition from the photographic to the "painter's theatre" should be conducted a little more warily than the author suggests, lest in the ecstasy of expression content be annihilated and the imagination of the audience stultified by pictorial magnificence instead of stimulated by the more subtle evocation of words.

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BOOKS IN BRIEF

Nature and the Country in English Poetry. By C. E. DE HAAS. (Amsterdam: H. J. Paris. 10s.)

At a time when the eighteenth century has begun to regain its glories, a Dutch scholar appears with this close and extensive survey of its nature-poets as far as 1750, which must become a respected manual for all who like the period. It remains, for the present, probable that the Augustan attitude to nature and the country required six hundred a year, a house and grounds; but it is also due to poems like "Grongar Hill" and "The Spleen" that they should be critically admired, and their originality defined. Professor de Haas is in his element when he is pointing out beauties, or paraphrasing and explaining his texts. We must not break in on the pious gravity which announces, "The poet also notices agreeable smells and sounds," and after all the majority of those who at present spend their leisure "in the country" would not qualify for that degree. In short, we receive now from Holland the nearest approach to an exhaustive chronicle of the Augustans as rural poets that we have. Even Pattison and Stephen Duck are on the black-board.

The Dragon Sheds His Skin. By WINIFRED GALBRAITH. (Cape. 7s. 6d.)

There is generally something in course of being shed in China, and Miss Galbraith's sketch-book does not shirk the fact; but its merit lies rather in those studies of intimate life in its milder terms, which predominate. The writer, unfettered by any obvious didactic prejudice, is adroit in style and quick in perception; she can identify herself with the dying Li Seng Ming and her pathetic fancies of the future world, or smile at the huffy misunderstandings and comic misadventure of Mr. Bustleton among the heathen. The collection of short essays is so delicately finished and expressive of a personality that one may fail to notice the quantity of information conveyed in it altogether. The brightness of touch, it may be added, has some similarity to the vital spark of Miss Stella Benson's manner, or Katherine Mansfield's; and assuredly there is room in the Far East for more feminine talent capable of the sympathy and sense of moment found in Miss Galbraith's microcosm—for the artistic treatment of fragments rather than the drab plasterwork of "China very much at Large" or "Japan as it were in General."

The King's Regiment (Liverpool), 1914-1919. By EVERARD WYRALL. Vol. I. (Arnold. 7s. 6d.)

To those with a particular interest in this regiment, the practised and exemplary recording of Mr. Wyrall will need little recommendation; and to those others (surely a numerous fraternity) who still care to know what war was like in 1914 and 1915, the necessary proportion of "Orders: Part II."—the dry, administrative side of the story—ought to be no bar. For Mr. Wyrall loves his Expeditionary Force, and either composes or brings to light passage after passage of the true Flanders intimation, humorous or serious; to name one, the panorama of the battlefield east of Béthune, the La Bassée Road and Canal, from Captain Sheppard's Diary, is almost perfect. Old secrets come back to life. There are dozens of good stories here, such as the entry in the Brigade Diary: "We bombarded the enemy trenches opposite the Duck's Bill. . . . The enemy retaliated by using vulgar and obscene language."

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INSURANCE NOTES

RAIN

THE inhabitants of these islands might be supposed to be thoroughly conversant with the subject of rain. Even so there are probably many to whom some at least of the facts given in the "Pluvius Weather Policies" prospectus will be new.

It appears that during that period of the year when rain is actually falling, it falls at the rate of approximately .05 inch per hour, so that ten hours' continuous rain will produce about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in the gauge. Compare this with the highest recorded rate per hour which occurred at Preston (Lancs.) on August 10th, 1893, when, during five minutes, rain fell at the remarkable rate of 15.00 inches per hour. The severity of this storm may be estimated by reference also to the average rainfall (1881-1915), 32.67 inches per year, and the wettest year (1872), when 56.73 inches were registered for the British Isles.

Although insurance against loss occasioned by bad weather is a comparative newcomer in the market, it is now an established practice with the Eagle Star and British Dominions Co., and at Lloyd's. The "Pluvius" policies issued by the "Eagle Star" are designed to protect not only holiday-makers, but also the promoters of practically every type of outdoor event against the loss due to rain.

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The business "Pluvius" policies cover one-day events, or series of one-day events, such as Fêtes, Athletic Meetings, Agricultural Shows, Exhibitions, Catering, and similar affairs dependent for their success on fine weather. Premiums for these risks will be quoted by the company on receipt of the necessary particulars.

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FINANCIAL SECTION

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

AUSTRALIAN BORROWING—INDUSTRIALS AND CELANESE—SHELL UNION—TIN

THE Commonwealth Government has been congratulated because it has successfully issued "internally" £20,000,000 of 5½ per cent. conversion stock to repay a like amount of 5 per cent. War Stock (1923) maturing in September. The success of the conversion from the point of view of the Australian taxpayer, who will have to pay 5½ per cent. interest instead of 5 per cent., is not obvious. The rate of interest paid on the Commonwealth public debt, according to the estimable figures of the Commonwealth statistician, has already risen from £4 19s. 3d. per cent. in 1923 to £5 4s. 8d. per cent. in 1927. It is reported that the lists for the 5½ per cent. Commonwealth conversion loan were closed three weeks before the appointed time, and that subscriptions totalled £21,780,000. In a new country with only six millions of population these subscriptions may seem gratifying, but it must not be forgotten that Australia is borrowing abroad at the rate of nearly £40,000,000 a year, and that if this borrowed money is not altogether spent on productive purposes, it nevertheless finds its way into the pockets of good Australians. The test of the soundness of Australian borrowing is whether the national debt is increasing at a greater pace than the national productivity. The statistics show that it is. We suggest that the Loan Council should go into this question with some care in its next prospectus and should give a statement showing how previous loans have actually been spent and with what profit.

Of the total public debt of the Commonwealth and the States—£1,043,000,000 being about £170 per head of population—the States debts account for about £690,000,000, and of these the capital cost of the Government railways amounts to £300,000,000. Railway expenditure in Australia may eventually become productive, but at present it is a burden on the taxpayer. For the year 1926-27 the Australian Government railways—Federal and State-owned—showed a revenue of £48,000,000, and working expenses of £39,000,000, leaving net earnings of £9,000,000. But the interest charges on the railway debt in 1926-27 took £14,000,000, so that the Australian taxpayer had to meet a deficit of £5,000,000. We imagine that a new and sparsely populated country like Australia would be more rapidly developed by motor transport than by rail transport. The growth of motor transport must, of course, affect the earnings of the State railways. Indeed, motor transport competition is expressly mentioned as a source of trouble in a recent Queensland report. It may be urged that the rates charged on Australian railways are kept unduly low—the pastoralist is, in fact, being subsidized by the taxpayer through the railways—but it should not then be argued by the Australian Loan Council, when it next borrows in London, that the money spent on railway works is productive expenditure.

The industrial share market at the present time presents a number of problems. Prices have not reacted as they might have done at a time when a trade reaction is in full swing. Although business is small, on account of the holiday season, the general "tone" is firm. The leading investment shares, in fact, have been fairly strong. Imperial Tobacco, British American Tobacco, Imperial Chemical, and Dunlops have all risen in price for no particular reason other than demand finding a market somewhat short of stock. If the recovery in the New York stock markets is partly responsible for the firmness of British industrial shares, there is need for caution. With call money in New York advancing to 8 per cent., with the threat of a further rise in the Federal Reserve rediscount rate, the prospect of another collapse in the New York stock market must be taken into consideration. The only serious break in industrial prices in London has been confined to certain artificial silk shares, Courtaulds always excepted. British Celanese, which has been over 6 this year,

fell to 2½ last account. As Dr. Dreyfus avoided at the general meeting making any statement of current earnings, these shares, even at the price of 3½, to which they have now recovered, appear still over-valued. American Celanese have come down from 22 to 13½. The 1927 net income of American Celanese after depreciation and reserves was \$2,900,000. The plant was doubled in March, and it was "officially" estimated that double the income would be earned. This would give earnings of about \$4 on the common shares after allowing for the 7 per cent. dividend and a 3 per cent. participation dividend on the participating preferred stock. But Celanese silk prices have been cut in America, and it would be unwise to assume earnings of \$4 on the common. Canadian Celanese have fallen from over 16 to 8½, and are now quoted at 9½. The yarn manufacturing plant began operations in January, and the cellulose acetate plant, we believe, in May. No estimate of earnings has been given. The common shares seem over-valued as compared with the \$100 preferred shares at 17½ on which arrears of dividend from April, 1926, have accrued.

The deer-stalking expedition in Scotland of the three oil magnates—Mr. Walter Teagle of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, Sir Henri Deterding of the Royal Dutch-Shell group, and Sir John Cadman of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company—has aroused a good deal of unenlightened comment. We have no doubt these gentlemen, combining a little business with pleasure, went stalking the petrol consumer as well as the Highland deer. A rise in petrol prices in Great Britain and on the Continent will probably follow at a discreet interval. The effect of the steady rise in gasoline prices which has been going on this year in America is already seen in the profits of the Shell Union Oil Corporation for the second quarter of 1928, when earnings amounted to 45 cents a share as compared with 15 cents a share in the first quarter and 22 cents a share in the second quarter of 1927. While the earnings for the first half year are below those of the first half of 1927, the second half will show considerable improvement in view of the further rise in gasoline prices:—

	1st half 1927	1st half 1928
	\$	\$
Gross Income	23,469,487	28,042,286
Deduct—deprec. depl. drilling, &c.	15,484,237	20,017,406
Debiture Interest	395,833	1,981,643
Net	7,589,417	6,043,237
Preferred Dividends	381,270	—
Common Dividends	7,000,000	7,000,000
Paid on Common shares ½ year	70 cents	70 cents
Earned on Common shares ½ year	72 cents	60 cents

For the whole of 1927 the Shell Union earned \$1.09 and paid \$1.40 in dividends.

An extraordinary article was published by a responsible financial newspaper last week on the increasing use of aluminium. The anonymous author asserted that aluminium was knocking out tin in motor-cars. America, he said, formerly used on an average 6 lbs. of tin per car; aluminium had now almost completely superseded tin for such purposes. It is surprising that such egregious nonsense should get into print. Apart from body work tin is not being superseded at all in the motor-car. According to statistics published by the Anglo-Oriental Mining Corporation the consumption of tin in the United States for the first seven months of this year showed an increase of 2,869 tons at 46,174 tons. The world's consumption for the first seven months is estimated at 87,461 tons as compared with 77,831 tons in the corresponding period of 1927. In other words, the consumption has practically kept pace with the increase in supplies, which are given as 89,144 tons for the seven months as compared with 77,661 tons the previous year. The statistical position of tin has not worsened appreciably this year, but the lack of organized selling has enabled the organized buyer to have it all his own way in the market.

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